

96 ESSAYS

96 篇文章

ENGLISH TEACHING CLASS 1701 (2017-2021)

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Students of the English teaching class 1701 (2017-2021), College of Foreign Languages, Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, China wrote these essays during March-June 2018. I did some editing. We have collected and presented these essays as a way of remembering where we were, what we were thinking, and what we dreamed of at that time.

本书收录了来自陕西师范大学外国语学院英语示范班1701班的32位同学在2018年3月至6月所书的文章。我加以编辑校对，谨以此铭记彼时的身所处，心所向，梦所愿。

Dr K

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ESSAYS



吕鸿飞

Lü Hongfei

Jerry

My name is Lü Hongfei. Hongfei is a symbol of an eagle flying into the sky. Father gave me this name, hoping I would be an ambitious man of the world. So, he was very strict with me in almost everything. Because of his effort, I developed many good habits during my student time. I was also one of the excellent students in my class.

Now, it's ridiculous to think of what I have done. I feel ashamed to waste precious time. Perhaps I have woven an unrealistic dream for myself. But to tell the truth, I do want to be a useful person to honor my parents, to help those in need, to contribute to society. The future is worth a better life.

My Parents

Thanks to this writing assignment about one thing in my life, I can recall the love given by my parents. It's really terrific.

In my mind, my father is a stuffy and strict person. Usually, he seldom smiles and is always serious. I was afraid of him when I was a little kid, especially since I did something wrong. Of course, I have been punished and hit by him many times. However, I understand his love for me. As the saying goes, Father's love is deep and heavy. I remember that he would buy anything I wanted to eat silently and every time I had a fever he would get too anxious to sleep all night. He is obedient and responsible to the family. Before my grandfather's death, he spent all his savings to treat his father and took on a lot of debt. In the same year, his hair was half white, which made me sad. I admire him very much.

Compared to my father, my mother is a kind, patient and warm-hearted woman. She works hard in a shoe factory. She has a good relationship with almost everyone she knows because she is keen to help the people in trouble. And that's what she asks me to do. She takes care of me carefully in every aspect, even spoiled. She doesn't expect me to be a great man as my father expects, just a normal person to live his life happily is OK. I love her very much.

When I was a child, I didn't understand why my parents got up so early. When I grow up, I realize that it is not the alarm clock that wakes them up, but the life and responsibility. That's my parents. In spite of their low educational background, they taught me many principles and excellent qualities. I am very grateful to them.

Running Away from Home

I haven't been a good, obedient child all the time. I want to be free, free, free and free. But my parents always think I am just a little kid, and should listen to them. So, a lot of conflicts broke out between us.

I still remember an experience about running away from home when I was a little kid. On a weekend night, my friends and I enjoyed ourselves so much that we forgot the time to go home. When I finally got home, my parents were very anxious. And my father was especially angry.

He shouted at me: "Where have you been? Can't you see how dark it is? Don't you know going home?"

I replied unconcernedly, "I just played with my friends and forgot the time. Is it that bad?"

He shouted again: "Let's see what time it is. It's 8:30. You're still hanging out at eight o'clock in the evening!"

I was angry too, replied in a loud voice: "Who cares? Only you have set so many rules for me."

My father spanked me. I felt unjust and ran away from home. My home is not far from the seaside. Every time I have trouble, I will come to the seaside. I saw many families walking by the sea. The parents held the kid's hand and the kid's face was smiling. I felt even worse, squatting on the ground and crying.

Then an old woman who walked her dog stopped and asked, "What's the matter? Can I help you, baby?"

"I quarreled with my parents and ran away from home," I replied.

"Why? You did something wrong?" she asked again.

"No, I just played with my friends and forgot the time to go home and my parents were angry," I added.

"Oh, it's your fault. You went home so late; your parents have to worry about your safety," she explained.

"But I just want to be free. And I don't like the rules given by

my parents." I said.

"Your parents have rules for you to love you. You parents' love for you from childhood is countless. Now, they must be very anxious." she said.

Suddenly, I seem to understand. "I must go home right now. Thank you, grandma. Bye!" "Safety on the road, bye!"

When my parents saw me outside, they were surprised to hug me.

"Sorry, dear parents, It's my fault. I'll listen to you late "Just coming back safely is enough."

The memory of this experience is still fresh in my mind. It might have been the folly of my childhood.

A Beautiful Hair Band

Li Li and Wang Fang are friends. They live in the same town. Li's father and Wang's mother work together. They bring their kids to the farm. The two little girls have deep affection for each other. They sing and dance, hide and seek. This year they are seven years old. It's time to go to school. They are divided into the same class. Every day they go to school together.

Li's father buys her a gift. It's a green hair band. She wears it to school. All her classmates think it is beautiful. Li feels proud. After school, Wang Fang goes to Li Li's house. They play happily as usual. She loves the band very much too. She asks Li where she buys it. Li tells her the store's name. Wang Fang remembers it by heart.

Next Monday, Li Li gets up early. But she can't find her hair band. She is anxious and sad. She arrives at school in hurry. She finds her classmates around Wang Fang. And Wang Fang wears a hair band. A green one, the same to hers. She believes Wang Fang stole her hair band. They quarrel and fight. Their relationship becomes bad. They don't talk to each other. They don't play together either.

At weekend, Li Li visits her grandparents again. She notices a green hair band. It's on the table. It's her hair band of course. She forgot to take it home last Sunday. She feels guilty about Wang Fang. Another day, she makes an apology to Wang Fang in person. They become good friends again.



刘皓宇

Liu Haoyu

Tyler

My name is Liu Haoyu, a boy from Xiang Yang, Hubei Province. I was born on January 27, 2000, in the small-town Yi Cheng. It was snowing heavily outside when I was born, so my parents named me Hao Yu to commemorate that day. According to Chinese dictionaries, Hao describes thick snow on the ground and Yu describes infinite space. My parents wished me to be successful.

I like playing the piano, I have been practicing it for six years. For me, life is something that we have to keep exploring. I like trying new things, like painting, tea, sports, and calligraphy. As a result, I have a colorful life on my campus.

Studying at SNNU is the first time for me to be totally independent. I want to say something about my school life here.

Being able to decide my lifestyle is a happy thing. I planned to get up early and play sports every day, I also joined in some wonderful clubs. But sometimes consistency is not as simple as we think. We are easily lazy and give up our plans. After almost one year of staying at this university, I find that the true meaning of university life.

Although I am just eighteen years old now, I believe that I can become a responsible English teacher in the future by studying really hard. We can't know what will happen in the future, what we can do is just keeping exploring.

Mother and the Piano

It was eight o'clock and time for me to practice playing the piano. There was only one month left for me to prepare for the piano competition. I had studied the piano for almost five years. This was an important opportunity for me to prove myself.

Mother came into the room, sat next to me, and said nothing. I calmed myself and put my fingers on the keys. I had already practiced several times and done a good job, but Mother seemed unsatisfied.

"No, it's not good enough, you must practice more," she said.

I felt upset and said, "I have practiced enough. I practice nearly two hours a day. Isn't that enough?"

"There are still many problems in your performance," Mother answered. "If you want to win the competition, you must practice more."

"I don't want to take part in the contest," I shouted and left the room. Mother said nothing.

A few days later, I began practicing again. Those few days off meant I made some mistakes. Mother didn't reproach me. She sat next to me and said, "Pay attention to your weaknesses." I was suffering from a bad cold at that time and told her hoping to have a rest. She answered, "Okay, let's go to the hospital now. We will come back as soon as we can."

I couldn't understand why Mother was so strict. I just wanted to have more time to rest. Mother insisted I practicing, though I was exhausted.

After a month, I went to Beijing to participate in the competition with Father. Mother didn't come with because of her job, but I called her every day. "Don't be nervous, just try your best," Mother encouraged. "I believe in you."

I got second place in the competition. A few years later, I asked her why she had been so strict at that time. She smiled and said, "Because I am your mother, I must be strict to help you. Don't worry if I'm not at your side, because I know you will succeed."

Thanks to Mother, I succeeded

My Youth

My name is Liu Haoyu, a boy from Xiangyang, Hubei province. I was born on January 27, 2000, in the small town, Yi Cheng. It was snowing heavily outside when I was born, so my parents named me Hao Yu to commemorate that day. According to Chinese dictionaries, Hao describes thick snow on the ground and Yu describes infinite space. My parents wished me to be successful.

I became a primary school student when I was five. In China, children usually go to primary school at six, so I was often the youngest student in my class. Although I was younger than others, I never gave up or felt discouraged. I tried my best to study. When I was eleven, the last year in my primary school, I had new classmates and teachers. To attend a better junior middle school, I studied hard. I was often in the top three in my class. My head teacher was a middle-aged man. He often wore a red coat and glasses. He liked standing next to the windows with a glass in his hands and watched us during classes. Mr. Bao loved mahjong. Many other teachers also loved it. Once we did something wrong, Mr. Bao asked us to stay in the classroom until seven PM. We felt so disappointed. But Mr. Bao finally left us alone because he had to play mahjong.

When I began junior middle school, my parents rented a room in the school for me. I stayed at the school for almost three years and went home only on weekends. During the three years, my happiest thing was playing the piano. I began to learn the piano when I was five. When I practiced playing, I felt very excited. It seemed that I became a bird flying in the sky of music. On one holiday, I took part in a piano competition and paid great attention to practice.

With only 1 month left for me to prepare for the piano competition, Mother kept helping me. She often sat next to me and said nothing. I calmed myself and put my fingers on the keys. I had already practiced several times and done a good job, but Mother seemed unsatisfied.

"No, you are not good enough, you must practice more," she said.

I felt upset and said, "I have practiced enough. I practice nearly 2 hours a day. Isn't that enough?"

"There are still many problems in your performance," Mother answered. "If you want to win the competition, you must practice more.

"I don't want to take part in the contest anymore," I shouted and left the room.

Mother didn't say any word.

A few days later, I began practicing again. Those few days off meant I made some mistakes. Mother didn't reproach me. She sat next to me and said, "Pay attention to your weaknesses."

I was suffering a bad cold at that time and told her so. She answered, "Okay, let's go to the hospital now. We will come back as soon as we can."

I couldn't understand why Mother was so strict. I just wanted to have more time to rest, Mother insisted I practice, though I was exhausted.

After a month, I went to Beijing to participate in the competition with Father. Mother didn't go together because of her job, but I called her every day. "Don't be nervous, just try your best," Mother encouraged. "I believe in you."

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Thanks to Mother, I succeeded.

After that holiday, I went to Xiang Yang No. Four Middle School, one of the best junior high school in my province. I met my best friend there. My first desk mate was Yu, who is a little fatter than me. He also wore glasses. Yu was a student with his own ideas. He decided his own way in grade one. He used to escape from school every day and fell in love. He fought his classmates and slept in class. His teacher once tried to wake him up. Yu fought and

injured the teacher. Yu should have left school but his mother begged the head teacher. Finally, Yu stayed in school. After that accident, Yu totally changed. He paid all his attention to study and was allowed by Tsinghua University.

I also met a favorite math teacher in junior high school. I hated math when I was a child. Every math teacher I had met before was very strict and impatient, but Miss. Shen was totally different. She was very considerate. I served as the mathematics representative for two years. I helped her hand in and hand out homework and papers. Once I asked, "Miss. Shen, why do you ask those lazy students to hand in their homework? They just copied from others'."

Miss. Shen said, "Don't worry, even though they copied others' homework, they looked at the right answer."

Miss. Shen often encouraged us to study math. She often told us that math was the most important subject so we had to spend time on it. With Miss. Shen's help, the mathematics of our class was the best in the grade.

On August 24, 2017, I began my college life. My roommates are all nice men, we got along well with each other. I also met a very different teacher. We all called him "Dr. K", an American teacher. He had been in China for more than thirty years. Dr. K taught me oral English last year. I will never forget the first class. Dr. K seemed to be very strict. Now I understand him because he told us about his responsibility. I was afraid of him, but I was willing to attend his class because I could really learn a lot from his class. I also joined some interesting clubs. Recently, I will edit a new newspaper with some friends. That will be interesting work.

Waiting

At 3:59 AM, June 24, 2017, I sat in front of a computer, waiting.
So happy. So nervous. So expected. So disoriented.

It was so quiet that the ticking of the clock seemed
thunderous.

My parents were both asleep. Only I was still waiting.

It was windy outside as soft moonlight shone through the
window. It had just rained. The air was moist and fresh. A few stars
shone. I felt sleepy, but I had to wait for the result.

It was now almost four AM. The temperature was low but I was
sweating. I stared at the glowing screen, right hand on the mouse,
motionless.

I trembled slightly in anticipation of the result.

Mom and Dad woke up. Their voices came out of the
bedroom.

"It's time."

Sunny. I had carried my backpack into a quiet classroom and
emerged a few hours later. The bell seemed to ring in my ears. My
heart then felt more relaxed than ever.

The darkness around me pulled me back to reality. It was
not the time to recall the old days, but time to face the result.

I still called the day when I entered high school and the day
when I left. In the last three years, I had spent most of my time on
what this result would bring--no, not bring, or?

No playing. No sports. No movies. No parties. We had all
prepared for this moment. It was time. My life waited.

An unexpected high score. Relief.

Entry to a good university. A bright future.



刘思婧

Liu Sijing

Emma

I was born on 5 November 1999 in Shanxi Province, which is famous for coal. However, there are also many places of interest. For example, Pingyao Ancient City, Hanging Temple, and Yungang Grottoes. They are all unique and attractive, I'm sure you will enjoy yourself.

I want to go to the university in the north, Xi'an is the best choice for me. Xi'an is a historical and cultural city. Compared with Beijing, Xi'an is not so crowded. Meanwhile, it just takes 3 hours to Xi'an from my hometown on the high-speed railway. My cousin also studies in Xi'an so we can go home together. For all these reasons, I came to Xi'an and began my college life.

I used to imagine my future, a high-paying job, a happy family and some close friends. I never thought I would be a teacher because I didn't think I was a patient person. But I change my mind

now. I used to hear that teachers are important because they influence many students. And it's my duty now, I should cut myself for this vocation. I will take every class seriously. I believe I could be a qualified teacher.

Duty

Mother was an ordinary middle-aged woman of medium height and a little fatter than others. She was shorter than I am now, but I thought she was the most powerful and serious person in the world when I was a child. Why? She thought education was the most important thing and taught us seriously. But one day, this changed.

Mother worked in government and had many good friends there, so we had many guests on weekends. One day, Mother's best friends visited us. Mother treated them in the living room and I went back to my own room to finish my homework after greeting them. I heard their laughter so I couldn't concentrate on my homework. I wanted to play computer games, and I knew Mother wouldn't refuse because her friends were present. As expected, she agreed, but she didn't look at me when she nodded. However, I didn't notice the subtle change in her emotion because of the situation.

Mother came into my room without any expression after her friends left. She sat in a chair, staring at me. I knew this meant that she was angry. I turned off the computer immediately and stood in front of her.

"How long have you been playing computer games?" Mother asked.

"About one and a half hours," I answered tremulously.

"Did you finish your homework?" she asked without expression.

"No!" I said fearfully.

"Do you know why I allowed you to play?"

"Because I asked you when your friends were here," I sobbed.

"You forced me into that situation, right?" her voice was now a bit louder.

"Yes," I sobbed.

She didn't scold me.

"I can understand that you want to relax, but you cannot do that until you finish what you should do. That's your duty as a student. You should know what to do because you are getting older. You have to judge many things by yourself. I'm your mother. It's my duty to tell you how to be competent. I hope you understand," Mother said and left the room.

I had nothing to say. It was the first time Mother had told something so directly. She thought I should understand "duty" in daily life. I was not a child in kindergarten anymore.

Mother taught me in a gentle way, that was important and effective. Though she was serious in daily life, I was never afraid of her. I love her, and I know that she loves me, too.

Special Morning

I quickly rode a bicycle on the way to school. I was cold. It was 7:50 AM. I would be late if I didn't arrive in ten minutes.

I had to stop and walk my bike to a shed when I reached the school gate. The bell rang. It was 8:00 Am. The security guard looked at me strangely. He should not have. It was not my first time to be late. He knew me. I had no time to think. I had to reach the classroom before the teacher came. I knew how to avoid teachers who waited for late students. I could find a safe way from the bike shed to the classroom.

"Halt! What grade and class are you in?" I heard the familiar voice of my head teacher.

"I'm sorry..." I turned, but nobody was there.

Strange, maybe I had heard wrong. It didn't matter, I was lucky.

I raced into the teaching building. A strange chemical smell. I guessed some new classroom on the first floor had been painted. The teaching building was quiet. I had to tread softly. Maybe I was the only student who was late. I didn't see anyone when I went upstairs. Not a good sign, I didn't have a companion. I would have to take care of the teachers by myself.

I managed to enter the classroom through the back door. Nobody noticed. Our teacher was absent. She had never been late in three years. Maybe she was ill. My desk was dusty, I had to clean it. I poured some water from my water bottle on a piece of tissue. It was a bit hot.

"Hold my bag, please," I said to my deskmate and gave it to him.

I heard my bag fall to the floor.

I was a little angry, turned, and scolded, "How dare you..." but he was gone.

It was class time. Where was he?

I stood up. The piece of tissue was still hot. The whole

classroom was empty now.

I took a mouthful of water. It revived me.

It was June 9th, the day after the college entrance examination.

That was why it was so strange. I was no longer a high school student. I shouldn't be at school this morning.

I will begin a new life.

Goodbye.

My Father

My father plays a very important role in my life. Every father has much effect on their children, so why do I do this?

My father values the company of the family. He was very busy when I was a little child so that I had little memory of him in my childhood. Sometimes I complained that he was not around, especially when my sister was born. At that time, my mother was tired because she had to take care of us and work. I even saw her weep sometimes. My father also felt this, so he wanted to accompany us and make us happy. As a result, Father gradually became my good friend. He could understand all my ideas and encouraged me to do everything I want. He also spent much time to accompany my mother and my grandfather.

Father never stops learning after working. It was a pity that he didn't go to the college, so he regarded our education as crucial. Father was just a worker when he started to work, but he never stops learning in his career. And he is a manager now. I don't know how much he learned in his early career, but I believe that efforts will not in vain.

Last but not least, I want to say, my father was very polite and gentle. He seldom loses his temper except we did something really bad, like telling lies. That's terrible I think so.

Father loves our family and shows respect to everyone. I appreciate his attitude towards life and study, which taught me a lot. I'm proud I have such a good father that I can follow his example to become a better person.



陈晗

Chen Han

Helen

My Chinese name is Chen Han and my English name is Helen. I was born on 25 October 1999. I come from Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei Province, which is famous for the Yellow Crane Tower and hot, dry noodles. It is normally regarded as the biggest city in the middle of China. I lived there until I came to Xi'an to go to college. Wuhan No. 4 High School is my senior high school.

I like reading especially literature and detective books. I love Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes Adventure Stories*. I admire Sherlock Holmes' precise thinking and profound knowledge. I also like Chinese classic books and dream of translating *Dream of Red Chamber* into English one day on my own.

With a dream of becoming an English teacher, I came to Shaanxi Normal University. Xi'an is an ancient city with a long history. The profound cultural background of Xi'an attracts me. As

far as I am concerned, teachers not only teach students academic knowledge but also have a strong influence on students' thoughts. I decide to study hard and improve my English in order to be a good teacher in the future.

Father

My father is of medium build and medium height. He has short, straight black hair and a weather-beaten face. As an ordinary worker, he takes his tasks seriously and works diligently and conscientiously. I considered him to be strict and I was afraid of him. I hated his old-fashioned thinking and inflexibility but had to comply with his orders. Compared to my mother, he does not express his emotions very noticeably. But I admired his conscientiousness.

When I was twelve, I studied in primary school. I often slept late. One snowy morning, I found it was very late to go to school when I woke up. I also didn't want to walk in the heavy snow and be criticized by the teacher. Finally, I decided not to get up. Mother called me, but I lay still.

"It's very cold. I don't want to go to school," I said.

"You have to go to school. Get up!" Mother said, angrily.

"Please, only today," I insisted.

Mother didn't say anything. I was thinking she had given in when Father came in. Without saying any word, he pulled me out of bed rudely.

"I don't want to go to school. Just one time, please," I said and burst into tears.

"Even though the weather is cold, you have to go to school because you're a student," Father said.

"It's too late now," I said.

Father's face changed color. He turned to mom and said, "Give me the broom!"

I knew he was going to beat me. I put on my clothes, washed my face and brushed my teeth as quickly as I could.

"The snow is heavy. How about driving the car to take her to school?" Mother suggested.

"Don't spoil her. Let her walk to school by herself," Father said calmly.

In the end, I walked to school in the snow.

I never slept late again. Instead, I was the first to go to school. I have also kept the good habit of getting up early. I thanked my father.

Father is bad-tempered and stern, but I thank him for giving me a good habit. I admire his conscientiousness.

Books and Me

Books are tools of the soul. We cannot determine the length of life, but we can grasp the width of life. Books broaden my horizons and make my life more meaningful.

Thanks to Mother for creating good surroundings for me to read when I was a little child. Mother is knowledgeable. When I was in primary school, I didn't like studying because I considered textbooks boring. Mother took me to the library and also bought me many novels. At first, I was unwilling to read them. But then I was gradually attracted by the interesting plots. Since reading my first book, *The River Snail Maiden*, I have been attracted by books. I tried to understand what the authors wanted to say. I thank Mother for creating good surroundings for me to read. Now I love reading.

Books help me a lot when I am in trouble. When I have difficulties and want to give up, I will think of Sara in *A Little Princess*, *Jane Eyre*, and *How the Steel Was Tempered*. They all have a strong will, which inspires me to stick to it. When I am desperate for a little thing, I will think of *A Brief History of Humankind*, *Historical Records of Si Maqian*, and lots of great books. I realize I am so small in the world that I couldn't be sad for such little things.

As Golgi said, "Books are the ladder of human progress." We may forget the plots of books, but the influence of books on our life is permanent and unconscious. Reading is a long-term investment rather than a timely interest. They contribute to our rich knowledge, conceptual renewal, and broader vision. And I will stick to reading a book all the time. This is the story of books and me.

A Present

It was a wonderful day. The sun was shining. Birds were singing. Flowers were blossoming. Today was special because it was my birthday.

When I woke up, my parents had left for work. A note on the desk said, "Happy birthday! We prepared a gift for you. We hid it. Find it!"

What was the gift? Why did they hide it? I felt curious and excited. It must be special.

I tried to calm down and thought of the gift. A birthday cake? Father often bought various cakes. I thought I smelt a cake. I went to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator, imagining a big birthday cake hidden inside. The refrigerator was almost empty.

Mother knew I liked to read. A new book? I rushed to the bookshelf and checked all the books. None were new.

I looked through the wardrobe and drawers but in vain. I was too tired to look more.

The sun was now covered by clouds. The sky was turning gray. I heard the howling wind.

Suddenly, I noticed something under the sofa. I grabbed it. It was a notebook. On the cover was written, "for Han." I opened it. It was full of stories of my growing written by my parents, from birth to the present. My parents had recorded many moments of this journey. "Han learned to walk when she was one. She can read a bit at two."

I realized how much they loved me. I had taken their love for granted and even quarreled with them.

Tears ran down my face. I knew why they gave this to me. I heard a knock. My parents were back. When I opened the door, I hugged them tightly. "Thank you! It is the most special gift I have ever received!"



刘倩

Liu Qian

Laura

I am Laura. My Chinese name is Liu Qian. I was born on 17 November 1999. The Chinese character "*qian*" means smiling as well as pretty in Chinese, so my parents gave me the name Liu Qian. My English name is Laura, which I gave myself in middle school for no particular reason. I'm from the small town in Ankang, Shaanxi Province, located in the south of the Qinling Mountains. It's surrounded by rolling green mountains. The famous Han River runs through there.

In my spare time, I like to listen to music. I collect records. Sodagreen is my favorite band. The lead singer of this band, Wu Qingfeng, is really talented. He has a unique voice, soft but also crazy. I want to learn to play the guitar. Then I can play his songs. I also hope to travel and learn how to take good photographs.

I love English. When I was in middle school, my dream was to be an English teacher. It will come true after I graduate from university. I have to practice English every day and read more English books. I need to improve my English in order to be a qualified teacher in the future.

My Brother

My brother is thirteen, which is six years younger than me. He is much taller than me, even though he is just in Grade One of middle school. He has small eyes, round cheeks, and curly hair. He loves reading and making friends. He is cute, but sometimes very annoying. Here is an example.

One evening during the Spring Festival, I was helping him with his English homework on the second floor of our house.

"That's all for today," I said, "We will continue tomorrow,"

He answered, "Okay, tomorrow," and left the room. When he was about to go downstairs, I walked out and hastily said, "What are you going to do?"

He was silent.

I continued, "I want to drink a soda."

"So do I!" he said excitedly, "How did you know what I was thinking?"

We laughed and went downstairs together happily.

While I was drinking my soda, I looked at him out of the corner of my eyes, afraid that he would laugh.

He did laugh. Then, I choked on a mouth of soda because I could not help laughing when I saw him laughing. I yelled, "Ah, I know that!"

He ran away, laughing.

"Yes, he is quite annoying!" I thought to myself.

The same thing happened last time while I was taking Chinese medicine. I wanted to drink it in one gulp because the medicine was bitter. But I failed, thanks to my brother's trick.

Here is another thing when I was twelve and he was six. It was an autumn afternoon. We found a piece of grassland with other children. The grass had withered, so it was easy to light. We came up with an idea that we could play a firefighting game. We set the grass on fire. Each of us put it out with tree branches. It was so interesting that we played the game again and again until we

couldn't control the fire. It almost touched the electric wires. Luckily, some adults helped us put it out in time. It was thrilling. We were scolded by them.

My brother is mischievous. So am I. Whenever he plays tricks on me, I pay him back in the same way. Even so, we love each other and we're good friends. I'm so lucky to have him in my life.

A Blind Date

One of my cousins is twenty-eight and single. In China, it's rare that someone isn't married at this age. So my aunt and uncle urged him to find a girlfriend and get married, but he can't make it on his own. Then relatives recommended many girls to my cousin.

This Spring Festival, he had seven days off, but he was not free because he spent five days on blind dates. Unfortunately, it came to nothing.

Afterward, he went on a blind date in Shanxi Province. When he arrived in Taiyuan, he found the girl was waiting for him with many snacks and a bottle of water. She was afraid my cousin was hungry. So he thought she was quite considerate and sincere. But later he changed his mind. During their second date, the girl wanted him to buy her an expensive bracelet as her birthday present. She often showed off how expensive her belongings were, such as her necklace and handbag. My cousin thought she was vain. He hesitated. Some of his relatives thought the girl was testing him because she changed a lot. My cousin keeps dating her.

The biggest reason my cousin isn't married is that he is not rich enough. He has a low salary, no house, and no car. He is also chubby. Anyway, he will marry sooner or later, because he also has many advantages. He is a warm, generous, kind-hearted man. His salary will improve if he keeps working hard. Nobody is perfect.

When I browsed Zhihu several days ago, I found a statement saying that the greatest meaning of blind date is to know what you are in others' eyes.

Anyway, a blind date is an important way to help singles find true love. Compared with other ways, such as dating advertisement or TV programs, it's more convenient and efficient.

A Difficult Struggle

I became fully confident. I smiled. I thought I could easily get him if I made full use of my wits. A piece of cake.

I was familiar with his style. I attacked quickly. Really easy!

Minutes went by. The opposite proved true.

He had changed. He was totally different from past encounters. Really tough. Very complicated. Tricky. Annoying.

I could barely control myself. What should I do? I racked my brain. I attacked. I failed. I tried another tactic. It failed. My heart sank. Sweat beaded and rolled down my forehead and onto my T-shirt, soaking it. I couldn't concentrate. Exhausted. Dizzy. I couldn't find my bearings. Everything around me spun. My brain was a mess. I was struggling.

He had no flaw. He performed so perfectly. I had underestimated him.

How difficult! Why did I suffer? It seemed that he was saying, "Just give up. You are so weak." These words electrified me. Wait and see. I had a million ways. I would try them all, one by one. I didn't believe that I could be defeated. Never, ever.

This was a balanced game and not easy. He was calm and showed no weakness. I tried to think differently. The air was heavier. I could hardly breathe. My heart pounded.

Suddenly, inspiration! A perfect way. Hope blossomed!

Yeah! I won! I won! I laughed. I danced for joy. Tired and happy. Victory! The long struggle had finally ended.

My struggle with this difficult math problem was not an ultimate victory. My struggle will continue. I will never surrender.



彭程

Peng Cheng

Bella

I was born on 19 January 2000 in Yingtan city. It is a small but beautiful city, which has almost no pollution. There is a river, which is a branch of the Yangtze River through the whole city. Just like many southern cities in China, there are many mountains and small rivers flow through them. I lived in Yingtan for eighteen years since I was born.

When I was a little child, I was in poor health. My father recommends me to join the school's sports team, which can give me more practice to improve my health. And I also got good grades in the competition. I also can play the erhu, a Chinese instrument, which can create a beautiful sound. At first, I didn't like playing erhu because it's very boring. Every day I need to practice the same movement and at least one hour.

I am now studying at Shaanxi Normal University. I am so glad that I can meet so many kind people and great teachers to teach me English. Now, I have a duty to study English well because I will be a teacher in the future.

My Childhood Buddy

My childhood buddy was a very kind girl; she had cute little eyes and long smooth hair. She wore a big hat which made her look like a little princess. When I first saw her, I thought that I smelled something sweet. I knew I liked her and wanted to make friends. I was lucky to meet her.

In China, summer is hot and humid. When I was a child, I often asked my mom to take me to a grandma's house. She lived in a peaceful rural area. It was cooler and the air was cleaner. Everything there made me comfortable. One weekend, I went to ask my mom to take me there. However, she was very busy. Her phone kept ringing. She didn't have time to talk to me. I sat on the sofa and changed the TV's channels very quickly. The hot weather annoyed me, I was bored to death. Mom found me there like a deflated balloon. She sighed and said "Dear, look at you! Ok! I'll take you to an amusement park." We changed shoes and started to leave. We had just reached the door when the phone rang. I knew our plan was spoiled. At that moment, I heard the door creak, I raised my head and saw a beautiful girl standing there clinging to her mother's hand. She wore a beautiful pink skirt with lace. "Oh, what a beautiful girl! What is her name?" I heard my mother say in surprise.

"My daughter's name is Meijuan. What about yours?"

"Oh! Such a beautiful name, call my daughter Xiaocheng." Mom turned to me and said, "Dear, please play with this pretty girl. I don't have enough time to take you to the park."

I didn't say anything; I was totally absorbed by Meijuan's sweet smile. "Do you want to play with me?"

"Ok, I want to play house."

"Oh, I also like that." Suddenly, her face changed, seemed she would cry.

"Oh, what's wrong? Did I say something bad?"

"No, it's just me. I miss my father. But he works in another

city and sees me only once a year. Every time I play house, I am reminding him."

"I am very sorry to hear that, I can play your father. My father often stays with me, and I also love him, I know how to be a good father."

"Really? You are so kind."

"It doesn't matter, I know it is very hard to miss someone especially he is your father."

When we began our game, we pretended it was morning. I lowered my voice and tried to sound like a man. I said "Sweetie, get up. We will eat breakfast first and then I will drive you to school."

"Ok, Dad, I will get up soon."

My weird voice made her burst into laughter. We laughed together. We had a really nice day.

After many years, every time we recalled our first met, we would feel happy and moved. I never will forget the first time I saw her. The feeling was wonderful. It seemed like the air was full of candies.

A Beautiful Coincidence

A girl in a coffee shop opposite my home. I guess she was about 20 years old. She was slim, tall, and so fair skinned that she looked unhealthy. Her hair was jet-black and straight. She seemed very energetic. The most striking part of her face was her big, twinkling eyes. When a handsome waiter asked for her order, she studied the men carefully.

Five minutes passed and then, she gave the waiter her choice, closed the menu slowly, and returned it to him. She checked her watch and looked at the door frequently, though she pretended to be looking at a clock hanging on the wall.

Five minutes later, the coffee arrived. She picked up the cup, sniffed, and smiled. Maybe the mellow odor pleased her. She looked calmer than before.

Three hours passed, when the hour hand pointed to six, she stood and left without a word, but wore a disappointed face. When I gazed at her distant receding figure, my mom asked me to take a parcel to Grandma who was ill and in the hospital. I suddenly came back to my senses and went to the subway station with the parcel.

I stood on the platform I was bored. The train came. I got on. I smelled a certain fragrance familiar; I glanced to my right side, where she was. So many people were on the train that we were almost glued to each other. Her phone rang. She took out it from her bag excitedly. "What happened? Oh! Thank God! I'll be there in ten minutes. Wait for me!"

Joy was in her voice. We both got off at the First People's Hospital station. We went into the hospital and entered the same elevator. I went to the Department of Gynecology on the fifth floor. I glanced at the button she pushed. It was on the eighth floor where the intensive cardiac care unit was located.

My Past

My name is Peng Cheng. When I was a child; I didn't like my name because it sounds like a boy's name. In fact, my name actually was for a baby boy, not for me. Because of feudal patriarchal thought, my grandparents wanted Mom to bear a boy, as boys could carry on the ancestral line, while girls cannot. Even now, many old people believe this. My great-grandmother was a feudal woman. The weather was very cold because of a heavy snow storm. Great-grandmother was happy because she thought Mom would bear a boy. However, when she saw a baby girl, she turned and walked away without hesitation. My grandmother begged her to stay, but she persisted in leaving.

When she died the year before last, I was told this story. I was shocked because I thought she was very kind, who often smiled. Every time we went to visit her, she seemed very excited and gave us money and candy. Maybe she smiled at my brother, not me, but I don't care anymore.

I was born in a typical family has three people, because of family planning. Although I am optimistic, I feel lonely sometimes. I speak less in front of strangers, but I love to make friends with others.

I was taken care of by Grandma before I was six years old. Mom was a Chinese teacher. Her school was far from our old house, so she didn't have enough time to take care of me. She asked her mother-in-law if she could care for me. However, Grandmother was also a feudal woman, who

didn't like me because I was a girl. She often left me alone when I was too young to eat by myself. She ever locked me in the house with coal burning. Because of dense smoke, I began crying and coughing. After an hour, Mom came home and "saved" my life. After that, Mom strongly insisted on buying a new house near the school. In this way, she could take care of me by herself. I really like my maternal grandparents. They lived in a beautiful village. When

summer vacation came, Father would take me there and I would stay for at least one week. He often helped my grandparents do farm work. He also asked me to help. I felt exhausted when I finished work, even though I did just a little.

Father used this way to teach me to not waste food because it is very hard to eat grain.

A clean river flows in front of Grandma's house. I was a mischievous girl and liked practical jokes. I found an aquatic whose skim was smooth and soft in the river. I put it on the ground and covered it with sandy. If someone passed by here and put their foot on it, they slid into the river. I climbed up a tree and stayed there waiting for an unlucky person. However, I never thought that person would be me. I waited on the tree for five minutes and then felt bored and hungry. When I heard Grandma calling my name, telling me dinner was ready, I jumped down from the tree and stented on the creature. Unfortunately, I slid into the river and I wouldn't swim. It was lucky that the river was shallow but it shocked me. I learned we shouldn't have a bad intention, because we must pay for it sooner or later.

I was a premature baby, which resulted in poor health. I spent much time living in the hospital when I was very young. To improve my health, Father encouraged me to take part in the track and field team. I have since become healthier and I actually have talent in running. When I was in primary school, I won many first prizes in the competition. I still yearn for those happy days running with my dear partners, even though I had to get up early in the morning to exercise every day.

I also used to play the erhu, a Chinese traditional instrument. My parent likes the erhu's sound. It IS a very good memory for my family.

As time went by, I was a senior high school student and quit the sports team, because Mother thought it would affect my grades. She required me to spend all my time studying. I also gave up playing the erhu. The Entrance Examination for College is very important. People believe that it decides your fate and changes your future. Every student study hard to make a good grade, I did the

same. To enhance my health, my father often sent a rich breakfast to me which was cooked by Mom. The breakfast had two eggs and one cup of milk. It was not very delicious but it was nutritious. It gave me the energy to keep a clear head and to finish my morning's study. Finally, I got a good grade and was accepted by Shaanxi Normal University. Mother was really proud, which made me feel happy.

At first, I don't want to be a teacher. First, I am not patient. I think I will fall into despair if my student can't understand me. Second, my throat was hurt badly when I was a child. It never recovers completely, and the doctor told me that I should not overuse my throat. Third, I am afraid that I can't qualify to be a teacher. However, I change my mind now. I find I really enjoy standing on the platform and having a presentation. I am fond of sharing what I know with people, and the most important thing is that I want to be an excellent English teacher. I want my students to have good grades in English. So, I will try my best to be a good teacher.



沈幸

Shen Xing

Christal

My name is Shen Xing. My mother gave me this name when I was born, hoping I would live a happy life.

My family is not very big. All my close relatives live in harmony and have an intimate relationship. I have no siblings but I have three cousins. When we were little children, we spent every day playing in fields.

I'm from Zhejiang Province. It takes seven hours to take the high-speed rail to my home from Xi'an. I love my hometown. It's comfortable and lovely. In the countryside, the air is fresh and the water is clean. It's clear so you can see fish swimming in the river. There are large areas of rice fields. Rice grows and changes color in different seasons, like a colorful oil painting. Dialects in Zhejiang

Province are difficult for 'outsiders' to understand. When my roommates hear me using my dialect, for example, they feel it is difficult to understand.

I'm very fortunate to have my family and several intimate friends who love me. Though life is not always smooth and I have to face some difficulties, I still believe life is beautiful and valuable. There is always something waiting for me to explore, like a book, a person, or a city. I hope I have the opportunity to learn more about our world. Every drop in the ocean is unique and important. I am willing to contribute to society and make myself shine.

A Meal

Before I was old enough for kindergarten, I stayed with my grandparents in the countryside. I spent every day playing with my cousin, Zheng Zheng. We continue to have a close relationship. He was mischievous, full of curiosity and discovered a lot of fun in daily life. It was relaxing and fun to play with him.

One summer day, I got up as usual. My grandparents were not at home and I couldn't find Zheng Zheng. Suddenly I heard a sound in the backyard. Out of curiosity, I went there and found Zheng Zheng burning a carton.

I asked, "What are you doing? Don't you feel hot?"

"I'm making a fire to cook some beans," Zheng Zheng said, his hands full of fresh green beans.

"That's interesting! I want to join you. I will find a pot for you."

"That's a very good idea."

I gave him a discarded metal bottle cap. Then I went to gather more papers and leaves to maintain the fire.

"We need some water. Can you get it from the kitchen?" asked Zheng Zheng.

"Sure. What else do you need? Oh, there are some bottles of cool juice in the refrigerator. Do you want one?"

"Yeah! I'm hot."

I came back with water and juice. We waited for the water to boil and then put the beans in, but before we tasted the beans, Grandma returned.

"Stop! What are you eating? Oh! Dirty! Don't eat that! Come here, I will make delicious food for you."

Although the first "meal" we cooked by ourselves was ended prematurely by Grandma, I will never forget the joy from that experience. It was like cooking in a forest and it gave us a wonderful feeling of freedom.

Last Winter Holiday

Last winter holiday was my most enjoyable winter holiday since I graduated from high school. Two things impressed me most.

First was a big meal on Spring Festival Eve. In the past few years, Grandmother usually prepared it for us. But, as she became older, my father began to do it. The taste and tradition have not changed. When I grow up, I will help Father prepare this most important dinner of the year. I'd like to pass this down from generation to generation.

Second, I traveled to Fuzhou and Xiamen with my parents. What made this trip different from others was that I planned the whole trip. When I was still in primary school, my parents often took me out to travel, planning everything for me. Now after graduating from high school, I have learned how to plan a trip from my friends and I'm able to take my parents out for a trip. My parents are proud of me.

I did quite a lot of things during the winter holiday, of which these two things above are the most impressive. I learned to think about my family's traditions and cherish the time we spend together. I want to enjoy this kind of holiday more often.

An Unforgettable Moment

I put down my pen, stood up, packed my bag automatically, and left the classroom. On the way to the school gate, I observed other faces curiously, wondering how they had done.

It didn't matter anymore.

A boy I had a crush on came into view. He was handsome and cool. I stared at the back of his head and his short black hair. I took in the way he walked as if I was trying to print him in my brain. I might never meet him again and I was sorry about that.

It didn't matter now.

I had no good friends here. I was lonely. No one would come to greet me and say goodbye. I had no one to share my emotions with. No one would tell me how things were going on.

It didn't matter now.

I approached the school gate where many waited for their children, asking others anxiously. I knew my parents hadn't come because my home was near the school. I could walk back on my own. I became excited and couldn't help smiling because I knew something was waiting for me at home.

I started running. I ran across the street, through the crowd. On this warm afternoon, I felt the warm wind surround me as I ran home. Tantalizing smells escaped from kitchen windows. Birds twittered.

I opened the door anxiously. I laughed in delight. My parents had made a big meal and had given me a box. I threw my bag down and enjoyed the meal with my family. It was so relaxing that it was like a dream that would vanish in a second.

At night, I lay on my bed, thinking about the whole afternoon. Tears flowed but, somehow, I was laughing.

I finally had IT.

A phone.

At the end of my high school life.

After a week of cold rain, winter came to this small city. The

neighborhood I lived in was old. Most of the residents had no heating or air-conditioning. They warmed their houses with stoves. I hurried to my home after school, listening to steam hissing from vents connect the stoves. I knew that Mom must have prepared a hot dinner for me.

Suddenly, I noticed bright flame lighting up the dark street. A house was on fire! I called out for help and several adults ran over.

"Call 119!" someone shouted.

People gathered and splashed water at the house.

The house was home to a thin, bent, old man. He had settled in our neighborhood for several years. His children worked in Shanghai. He lived by collecting empty bottles and recycled paper. I never saw anyone visit him.

Firemen came. They extinguished the fire and rescued the old man.

"Cui! Save her please! My Cui!" the old man cried.

"Is anyone else in the house? We didn't find anyone," a fireman said.

"Yes! My wife! My wife! Please save her!" he insisted.

The firemen rushed back into the house again. They searched carefully, but they still didn't find any trace of his wife.

"No, she is inside! She is listening to Beijing opera!" he said.

"I've heard him mention his wife, but I never see her," a neighbor said.

"He always says his wife is listening to Beijing opera."

"Maybe she is sick and unable to look after herself," other neighbors suggested.

The firemen decided to try again. Some people and the old man followed them. I felt very sympathetic, and went into the house, hoping to help. The shabby house had only three small rooms. One of the rooms was badly burnt. The other two rooms were totally in a total mess. The walls had been burnt black.

"What are you doing here? Go home!" Mom scolded when she found me.

"Mom, see that a photo of a woman. I guess it's his wife," I

said loudly, pointing to a photo on the ground.

A black and white photo with a silk white flower, and a smiling old woman. The house suddenly became quiet. Only the old man could be heard.

"Save her! She is listening to Beijing opera!"



辛瑜

Xin Yu

Lavender

My name is Xin Yu. I am from Rizhao, Shandong Province. My hometown is a beautiful place with fascinating sights, such as the sea and sand. Locals like going to the seaside and enjoying the summer sunrise. My favorite flower is lavender. I like this attractive flower, not only because of its appearance but also because of its romantic connotations.

Now I am in Xi'an, a beautiful city. I'm a college student. I have to study and acquire more knowledge to enrich myself, however, in my life, I also want to participate in various activities including volunteering and practice in my spare time. I think I will take full advantage of my college time.

My English Teacher in Senior High School

I am a college student. I chose English as my major because of my senior high school English teacher. I had three English teachers in senior high school, and all of them helped me a lot. But I just want to talk about my last English teacher in senior high school who deeply impressed me.

Mr. Zheng is a man with short hair, and who is a little fat. All of us liked to make fun of his appearance. Mr. Zheng loves to tell jokes to create an active classroom atmosphere. At the beginning of the semester, I thought Mr. Zheng was kind, however, after several days, I was afraid of his classes. My English scores were at the bottom of my class, consequently, Mr. Zheng asked me to answer questions, frequently, and I couldn't give the correct answers. For these reasons, as soon as I had an English class, I was frightened. I hated English exams because of my poor English grades. No matter how much I feared English, I had to spend most of my time studying English on account of the college entrance examination. However, not all hard work pays off. Even though I tried hard, my English made little progress. I was upset and didn't know what to do. After every English exam, I went to the office to talk to my teacher, and I could find my shortcomings. Although I disagreed with some of his teaching methods, I got a better grade at the college entrance examination through his training.

His teaching method profoundly affected me. I'm very grateful for him helping my English study. I think I should try my best to study English. I want to be a good English teacher in the future.

Village Winter

I spent my childhood with my grandparents in a small village surrounded by mountains and near a long clear river. Grandmother had three children. My father was her second child. My uncle had a son who often played with me. Their home yard was adjacent to my grandparents'.

My cousin was older than me and attended a local primary school behind my grandparents' house.

Winter in the village was beautiful and fun. The river surface froze and kids liked skating and walking on the ice. I never tried it because adults forbade me to play on the ice. However, the forbidden nature of this activity only made me more eager to do it.

One winter day, Cousin took me out with my little sister. We passed by the ice-covered river. I wanted to play on the ice and I said, "I want to skate! May I?"

"Are you kidding? It is very dangerous, and we will be punished," Cousin said.

"They won't know anything about this," I said.

"We don't know if the ice is strong enough to support us. Let me try first," Cousin said and carefully walked on the ice.

"The ice is safe. We can play, but just for five minutes," Cousin said.

"Five minutes? Can I have another ten minutes?" I asked.

"No, the weather is too cold, and we must go back home early."

"Ok, I understand," I said.

We played on the ice. I stepped on a piece of ice near the river surface.

"Be careful!" Cousin warned.

"I will. It is very safe. Nothing will happen," I replied.

Suddenly, the ice broke! My upper body got wet and I nearly fell into the water. Cousin caught me just in time. My clothes were wet.

"Are you okay?" Cousin asked.

"What should I do?" I said. "If we go back now, we will be scolded."

"We can go to my home and dry your clothes," Cousin suggested.

We went to Cousin's house, but, we didn't have a key. Nobody was at home. "There is nothing we can do except go to your home," Cousin said, so we had to go to my grandparents' home.

We were all scolded by the adults, nevertheless, the experience was interesting and exciting.

Darkness

Why can't I see the light?" I thought. "It's time to get up."
I was scared. No light. No people.

Where are my parents? The darkness made me uncomfortable. I wanted to run.

"Where am I?"

"Is it still night? Is something wrong with my eyes?"

"The only thing I can do is to find someone. Yes, I must learn what happened. This must be a joke."

I had to walk slowly in the darkness. Suddenly, my right hand touched something strange with soft fur and sharp teeth.

"What?" I cried.

I waved my arms. Something was coming toward me. I was afraid that it might hurt me or even kill me. I wanted to protect myself.

"Bang!"

Something heavy fell to the ground.

"Maybe it's dead. I must leave," I thought.

It was difficult to walk. I shouted to attract attention. Nothing happened. I had been abandoned by the world.

Suddenly, I saw a dim light in the darkness. I was very happy. People were here. I would be able to leave this terrible place.

I ran as fast as I could, but no matter how fast I ran, I couldn't seem to move. I didn't know why. I felt tired. I was still scared, but I couldn't move a step. I sat on the ground and cried. I felt helpless. Tears flowed. I had no strength to wipe them away. They trickled into my mouth, salty and bitter.

"What's wrong with you? Come eat your breakfast."

I was confused. What had happened?

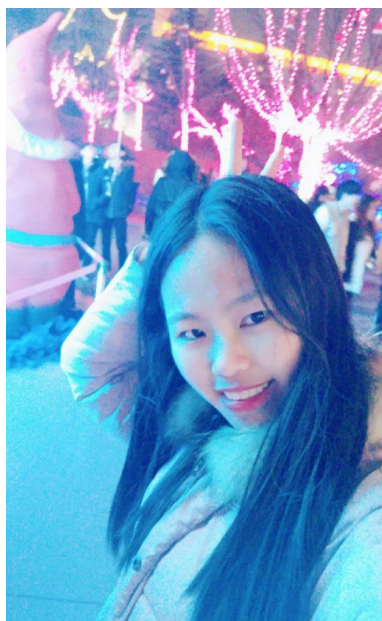
"Who is that woman?" I wondered and smelt rice cooking.

"Wake up! You'll be late."

I woke up.

"Look at your bed! Look at the floor! Your toys and books are on the floor! Why are you crying?"

"Nothing," I said, "A nightmare."



张姝娴

Zhang Shuxian

Doris

I was born 22 January 2000 in Linyi, Shandong. It is celebrated for its revolutionary history and cultural celebrities such as Zhu Gelang, a famous politician in three kingdoms period, and Wang Xizhi, a famous calligrapher. I lived there until I came to Xi'an to go to college.

Under the influence of my teaching family, I dreamed of being a teacher from the high school period. English is my best subject so I choose English as my college major. I enjoy experiencing different kinds of activities, so in the freshman year, I took part in a sports meeting and New Year's Eve gala, which gave me an impressive memory.

I have broad interests including calligraphy, photography, dancing, swimming, piano and so on. Doing things I like fulfills my time and makes my life wonderful. Absorbed in these interests, I dispel all boredom and annoyance.

Something About My Growth

My grandfather gave me the name, Zhang Shuxian. The two Chinese characters in my first name are uncommon so I couldn't write my name correctly until primary school. The meaning of my Chinese name is beauty and elegance, but I think I haven't achieved this goal. My English name is Doris. I found a Nobel Literature Prize winner named Doris Lessing. I love her books so I choose the name.

I was born in Linyi, a small city in Shandong which many people have never heard of. I have a complicated feeling about my hometown. It's not like Qingdao and Jinan. It lacks resources. For example, few concerts and operas are held in our city, educational resources are limited, and the air pollution is serious. I had little chance to contact a wider world. That's why I worked very hard to enter a top university, go to a big city and see a wonderful world.

I understand that knowledge is important. Mother changed her destiny through study. She had five siblings. Only she received a college education and became a teacher. She moved into the city from the countryside and had a good life since then. She often told me that studying well is the only way to have a better life. I never doubted it.

Mother made much effort to give me a well-rounded education. She is a farsighted mother and educator. When I was in kindergarten, I loved watching the teacher playing the piano. Her fingers seemed to have magic! Mother noticed my interest in the piano, so she took me to a kind piano teacher, who was a music teacher in my mother's school. She was strict with my piano lessons but she often gave me candy, biscuits, and storybooks. I liked her very much. Nevertheless, learning to play the piano is a boring, hard process. Four years after my first piano lesson, I wanted to give up and begged Mother to stop my lessons. My mother was very angry with my attitude and beat me hard. After that, I never mentioned "giving up" again.

I joined various interest-oriented classes, such as calligraphy, dancing, Chinese painting, guitar, badminton, and so on. However, I didn't attend most of these interest clubs for a very long time. For example, I only learned to play badminton for one month. But I still keep some hobbies. I started dancing again when I entered college. I have tried Chinese classical dance and jazz. The interest-club experience deeply influenced me. I have studied English since grade three in primary school. I still have a clear image of my first English teacher. Her voice was mild and soft. But now when I reflected I found her pronunciation was poor. I didn't realize it at that time. My middle school English teacher was a strong man. Actually, I didn't like him because of his rudeness and ignored his lectures. Meanwhile, I learned New Concept English. That was why I didn't fall behind in English subject. My high school English teacher, Mrs. Hu, impressed me. Mrs.Hu found my problem in English and gave me a way out. She told me that words were the basis for learning English. Then I transcribed words ten times every day and asked Mrs.Hu to give me dictation every night. She also ordered the China Daily for me to improve my reading skills. Thanks to her, I greatly improved my English. I want to be an excellent English teacher who brings positive influence and benefits to students, so I chose English as my college major.

The Gaokao is the only ladder which helps you climb up to a better life. The process is hard but worthy. While I am from Shandong, where the Gaokao is like a rat race. I knew I had to pay price to achieve my goal.

In summer,2017, I chose Shaanxi Normal University from which my dream flies. I chose an English teaching major, which decided the rest of my life.

That's my brief self-introduction. My story is still going on. I believe that more excellent stories will happen

The Story of Xizhi's Schooling

My mother, Xizhi, was the youngest child. She had two brothers and three sisters. It was a normal farming family. Her parents could not afford school fees for their children. Besides my mother, one with the most education was my mother's eldest brother, Furui, but he only got a middle-school education certificate. He was forced to give up further study because of the family's poverty. The children only attended primary school for a few years. My mother was eager to study. She was serious about study, farming, and housework. She was facing the college entrance examination at that time. Furui saw her potential and persuaded their parents to support Xizhi.

"Father, Mother, I know Xizhi will be outstanding. She is eager and able to study well. She will get high marks. Please support her," Furui said.

"We want to support her, but if she is admitted to college, the school fee is very high. Can you imagine what we would suffer to pay?" Grandmother replied helplessly and sadly.

"She is our last hope. We can't let her lose this chance. She can finish my unfinished dream and help us. It is the only chance to change destiny!" Furui continued.

Xizhi listened secretly. Confused and helpless, she understood the situation: siblings to raise, unpaid bills and debt...but the college entrance examination would come in six months. Give up the chance of future or fight for herself? She didn't know what to do. She needed help.

Her head teacher, Ms. Wang, found her distracted at such a critical moment and asked Xizhi to come to her office.

"What happened? What's on your mind?" Ms. Wang said.

"I...I..." Xizhi sobbed, not knowing what to say.

"It doesn't matter. Tell me. We can solve it together," Mrs. Wang comforted.

"I...I cannot attend the college entrance examination. My

family can't afford the costs I would only increase their burden."

"Money is a problem, but life has only one chance. I can help you apply for student loans in line with the policy the government has introduced to encourage impoverished students. So, stop worrying and put your heart and soul prepared for the exam!"

Hope appeared.

Xizhi took advantage of the next six months and entered Linyi Normal University. She worked hard during her four-year college life. With student loans and scholarships, she finished her undergraduate study as valedictorian. After graduation, she became a Chinese teacher in Linyi No.11 Middle School. Talented and enthusiastic, she was soon promoted to be a head teacher in the Chinese language. Now, no one can imagine how she was once trapped in a dilemma and came very close to losing a precious opportunity.

Mother's story inspires me for never give up, to know what is important, and to chase your dream.

Unforgettable Night

How do you overcome desperation?

I will never forget the night of May 30, 2017.

Ten PM. Empty street. Cold. Lights shimmered far away. Darkness embraced me.

The six-floor high school teaching building was a monster with two wide open eyes. I had escaped away from this huge monster ten minutes earlier.

The message on the wall hit my head like a bullet. It announced the last mock test results. As usual, I looked for my name at the top of the long list because that's where it usually sat. I had confidently assumed this time would be the same.

The first name...Xie Yu? Not me? I was shocked. OK, the second name must be mine.

The second name... Dong Min? Oh, come on, something must be wrong.

I continued to research and my sense of panic grew. I finally found my name in the 20th place. Impossible! I couldn't believe it.

My classmates jabbered about the results. I escaped and dashed outside. I wandered along the streets, reflecting my failure.

"Why did I get such a low ranking? What will my classmates think of me?" My brain was a mess. I was hardly sane.

I sat on the roadside. I threw my heavy bag down. The cold wind hit my face. I buried my head in my arms. I sobbed. I wailed. No one would know. The street was empty.

I couldn't stop thinking. Seven days later, I would attend the Gaokao. This momentous exam would determine my destiny. This mock exam was my last chance to test my level. Teachers had said this mock exam was very easy and we would all get good marks. The school organized it to increase our confidence before Gaokao. I had done so badly!

What if I failed the Gaokao ? Only seven days left. Did I have a chance to climb back to top place? If I failed the Gaokao, I would

not enter a good university. If I didn't enter a good university, I wouldn't get a good job. My efforts would be wasted. My life would be a complete tragedy.

Stars shimmered. Silence embraced me.

It was no use sitting and feeling sorry for myself. I stood up and went home. I told myself. "Just have a deep sleep. Everything will be OK. Tomorrow is a new day."



魏玉珂

Wei Yuke

Catherine

My name is Catherine. I am nineteen-years-old and I come from Qingdao, Shandong Province, which is a beautiful city in the east of China.

I am a freshman of Shanxi Normal University and major in English teaching. What makes me happy is that language is my favorite major, although I do not like the idea of being a teacher as my career.

When it comes to my character, optimistic, helpful, warm-hearted and easy-laughing come to mind. Yes, actually, I am such a person. So, it is easy and quick for me to make friends with others.

Luckily, I have at least four close friends. We continue contacting with other and sharing our daily life.

About my future, my plan is that I can become a qualified English teacher and then become a translator with my effort.

I will persist in my dream.

Puppy Love

I become a high school student. I am fifteen years old. I do not know anyone. I sit alone by the door. I never talk to others. There is a rule in my school. Students cannot use a phone. But I take my phone to class.

On Friday, Teacher hears me using my phone. He says, "What are you doing? Are you using your phone? Do not break school rules!"

"Sorry, I will not do it again," I reply.

One day, I miss my mother very much. I cry. A boy comes to me.

He asks, "Why are you crying?"

"I miss my mother," I say. He takes me side. We walk by the road.

He says, "I understand you. But we study here. Can you study now?" "No," I answer.

"I am your friend. I want you to be better." On hearing that, my tears run down. We become close friends.

He notices that I sit alone. He asks to be my desk mate. I am good at math. He does well in English. That is good for our progress. Every day we go to school together. We become closer.

He is very kind and warm-hearted. He also gets along well with other girls. I feel angry sometimes.

Suddenly he says, "I love you." I am shocked. We are too young. Study is the most important task. I refuse him.

Next year, we are in different classes. We do not talk about the past. Two years later, we got to college. I only meet him in winter.

We are still close friends.

One Moment

A woman was running. So eager. So urgent. So worried. Why was the woman running?

She used all her strength, looking around. She had run over three streets. At the moment, she met an old man and asked: "did you see a little girl?"

"Sorry, I did not see her. But just a few minutes ago, three boys were playing games at the end of this road. Maybe she also is here." The old man said.

"OK, thank you!" the woman replied to him.

Perspiration ran down from her face. Her T-shirt was soaked completely. But she still kept running while using her sleeve to wipe the sweat. She whispered: "where are you?"

Suddenly, she saw a girl. There were three boys and a girl who sat under a big tree. One boy was talking jokes and the girl burst into laughter. Actually, the girl was safe and young.

That tallest boy turned and noticed the woman watching them. He asked her: "Who are you looking for?"

The woman said: "I am the girl's mother."

"Hei! Your mother! Come here!"

On hearing that, the girl rushed to her mom and said: "mom! Why are you here? Why are your clothes completely wet?"

"I am worried about your safety. Because I am informed that you are taken away by several boys."

"Oh, mom! They are my classmates. Today is the last day of our summer holiday. So, we play together. In addition, I am fifteen years old. It is no use for you worrying about my safety excessively. I love you! Mom!"

The girl hugs her mother tightly.

Actually, I am this girl and the woman is my mom. I love my mom.

The Meaning of My Past Days

My name is Wei Yuke. "Ke", is a Chinese character that means pure, clean, and honest. That's why my father named me. I went to college, one of my teachers often said, "Try to be responsible because you will become an English teacher." With the great expectation of my father and teacher, I often think: "What is the meaning of my life?"

I live in a small village and my family is not very rich. Once I was born, Mother went out to work. I was brought up by my grandma. At that time, my grandma got along well with my grandma Wang. Wang was the sister of my grandma Wang had been in ill for a long time.

Two days before the Mid-Autumn Festival of 2007, a time of union and happiness, Wang was badly ill again. We had become accustomed to her not feeling well, but we could not afford to take her to the hospital in the center of our city. At that time, every village had a doctor. It was the doctor who gave intravenous injections to Wang relying on his limited professional skills.

One morning, my grandma and I went to visit my Wang. She lay on her bed with her eyes closed. She looked very pale and weak. What shocked me was that there was a little basin near Wang full with fresh blood. I burst into tears and said: "Wang is dead! Wang is dead!"

"Do not talk nonsense! Wang is getting better!" My grandma took me out quickly.

Unfortunately, Wang passed away that night. Her death was like a bomb that shocked her husband. Her husband stood by the window with his head buried in his hands. Meanwhile, my grandpa organized men to dig a grave. The friends of Wang came to our house and helped clean and dress Wang. All the relatives had to wear white clothes and wore white shoes to express their sadness. On midnight, Wang had been dressed and placed on some wooden boards in the room. And an old man covered her face with a

handkerchief.

I was informed that as the granddaughter I should pray for Wang for a whole night. I knelt in front of Wang and watched her attentively. Some adults said I did need to kneel. However, I persisted in praying for my grandma because it was the only thing I could do for her. I hope she could live happily in Heaven.

After the passing of Wang, I treasure my families more.

Praying for my family is the meaning of my life. How time flies! That year I was in grade four.

"Hello! Would you like to play with us?" a lovely girl said and smiled at me.

"Sure! My pleasure!" I said.

Several girls and I played rope (a traditional game) together. When the game finished, the girls went to their own classrooms.

"Are you in class three?" I asked.

"Yeah! What about you?"

"We are in the same class! Let's go inside."

Xue was the first person I knew in my class. Coincidentally and joyfully, we were desk mates. As time passed by, we became close friends.

Differences bring mutual attraction. Like most students, I studied hard. I was the top student in my grade and received endless praise. Some students wanted to copy my homework. However, Xue did not care much about study. She spent lots of time participating in activities such as singing and dancing. I was attracted by her courage and confidence when she was on stage. She admired my study well. During the breaks between classes, we chatted about interesting things and laughed.

We also did many things together. Xue and I were particularly interested in one TV series called *Happyboy*. Especially, as a crazy fan of Zhang Jie, a male star in that series, we often discussed and sang his new songs loudly on the playground. We even imagined that we could meet him incidentally. We rode a bike after school. We lay on the grass and shared our dreams. We complained about our annoying math teacher. He often assigned lots of homework! We cooked a meal on my birthday. Such sweet

memories!

Later, we were in the same junior and senior high school. In 2017, we both took the college entrance examination. I came to Xi'an, and she went to Shandong Province.

We continue contacting with each other and share our daily lives. I feel honored that I can make a close friend. And I will protect this friendship forever.

When I made friends with her, I was eleven years old. For me, treasuring pure friendship is one of the meanings of my life.

...

In the autumn of 2017, I became a senior three student. Preparing and passing the college entrance examination successfully were the main tasks for all students. For me, this examination provides an opportunity for me. But as most people know, the process of preparing for this examination is not easy.

During the last three months, all the senior three students threw themselves into the last round of review. One comprehensive examination consisting of all subjects was held every Friday. Even though I often ranked among the top ten students in the whole grade, I was not confident, especially in math. My math marks changed dramatically from 140 to 110, even sometimes 90. Facing such unsteady math scores, lots of worries filled with my heart. I even thought that I wouldn't pass the examination.

As time passed, I was too stressed to pay attention to my study. Every night, I rushed to the playground, lay down and watched the dark sky. I felt my future was as uncertain as the dark sky. This anxiety lasted for about one month.

In order to relieve, I wrote a diary, jogged slowly, sought help from teachers, and so on.

Finally, I persisted and succeeded! At least, I am satisfied with my result. I have no regret!

Actually, everyone was quietly focused on their own study. It was a time that all of us were totally devoted to the struggles and had the same purpose.

That year I was eighteen years old. Making great efforts for my goal is one of the meanings of my life.

...

In the autumn of 2017, I became a freshman at Shaanxi Normal University majoring in English Teaching. That means I will be an English teacher later.

Actually, I am reluctant to be a teacher because I think this profession is insipid and uninteresting, but now I have changed my thoughts.

Here, I met an American teacher called Dr. K. He came to China in 1984 and devoted himself to English Teaching for almost thirty years. He is very responsible in his job.

He said, "Pay attention to your pronunciation. You will be an English teacher! Your pronunciation will influence your students." This was the first time I realized the great importance of being a qualified teacher.

I am grateful to him. To tell the truth, I have never seen such a teacher who is really responsible and has great expectation for his students. Gradually, practicing my oral English as much as I can do was my routine. When I speak English, my mind is filled with the idea that I will be a teacher. And also, I realize that as a future teacher, I must be responsible for my students. To some degree, their English learning is strongly influenced by me! How I pronounce English is learned totally by them. If I cannot possess the standard pronunciation, I cannot imagine how poor their English will be.

This year I am nineteen years old. I learned how to be a qualified teacher from dear Dr. Kevin. Being responsible for my students is one of the meanings of my life.

Praying for my family, protecting a pure friendship, persisting to reach my goal, preparing and being responsible for my job are significant in my life. In the future, I will continue to explore other meaning of my life with a warm heart.



李蕊

Li Rui

Regina

I am Regina. I come from Rizhao, Shangdong, a beautiful seaside city. Every summer holiday, I go to the beach to have a great time with my friends. The view is amazing, blue sky, clear sea, golden sand, and gentle wind. We often walk on the beach barefoot and feel the warm, soft sand. Not only is the view attractive but the seafood is delicious. You will like it on condition that you are not allergic to seafood.

In terms of hobbies, I will describe one of them, which I developed in college life: watching U.S. TV series. I liked watching Korean soaps, because of the attractive characters and the exciting plots. However, my roommate influenced me and I fell in love with American dramas. The most important is that I can improve my English. It also can help me broaden my horizons and have more

knowledge of American culture.

As a tuition-free normal college student, I'm going to be an English teacher. Therefore, I hope I can be my students' friend and teach them. This is based on how much knowledge I have. It means I must study hard.

My Little Sister

When I was eight, my little sister was just two years old. She walked like a duck and called me sister. At that time, I didn't like her because she followed me wherever I went. If I abandoned her, she cried and rolled on the ground. Mom would show up and force me to babysit. My friends often laughed and said, "Your little shadow comes with you again."

Behind our house is a hill that villagers turned into a terraced field. It is a children's paradise. One weekend in spring, there is the clear sky, warm wind, and green wheat fields. In the morning, I made an appointment with my friend for a spring outing. I brought some food. As usual, I also had to bring my little sister.

We flew kites in the field. We ran, laughed, and had a great time. Soon we were tired and hungry so we stopped to rest and eat. However, I found that my water was dumped by my sister, who was using it to make mud. I angrily said, "How mischievous and dirty you are!" I was very thirsty and wanted to go home and get some water. But what about my sister? She walked slowly. If we all went home, we wouldn't come back again because of the time restriction.

My friend suggested that I make my sister stay there. She and I would bring water and come back soon. I followed my friend's advice. We then went home quickly, drank some water, and ate some food. I then took a box of milk for my sister and walked to the hill.

When I got back, I found out that my sister wasn't there. I called her name loudly but no one responded. Mother had told me about some bad guys who stole kids and sold them. I was so scared and guilty and I burst into tears. My friend comforted me that my sister might have gone home on her own. So, I got back quickly but I didn't find her. At lunchtime, my parents came back from the fields. I told them that I had lost my sister. My parents scolded me and went out to search for her, but later told me that they couldn't find her.

I cried every day and prayed to the gods to bring her back. When I slept, I often dreamed that a bad guy didn't give her food and tortured her. When I woke up, my pillow was wet. I was in the depths of guilt. A week passed, and my parents still hadn't found her. I felt hopeless.

One day, my grandparents brought my sister home. I rushed over and hugged her. At that moment, I swore that I would take care of her forever. My sister told me that my grandparents had walked by and had taken her to their home.

Our relatives are most important in our life, and we should cherish them. Now I am more mature. I think I can be a better sister and it is my duty to care for her.

Friendship

When I was a child, I went out with the kid next door for a spring outing. Her name is Li Han. Beautiful and lovely, she sometimes was impulsive, stubborn, and lost her temper easily.

After lunch, there was a clear sky, warm breeze, and comfortable sunshine. "What a beautiful day! Let's go out for a wonderful spring outing." I said happily.

She answered, "Let's go!"

We prepared our backpacks, two bottles of water, and some food. We each told our own parents and set out.

We walked along a narrow path. Wildflowers bloomed and grass was growing. We got tired but continued. Finally, we reached our destination. Exhausted and thirsty, we spread out the plastic sheet and lay on it. We looked at the blue sky and puffy white clouds and talked about our dreams and ideal life. "I want to be an excellent teacher like Mr. Song," I said.

She said, "I want to be a doctor!"

When we decided to go home, we disagreed about which direction to take. "Let's go this way. Let's try a new way. We can find something different and amusing," she said, pointing to the right.

I wanted to go left because it took less time. If we returned late, our parents would worry. We quarreled. She stubbornly didn't listen.

"I'll go my way, and you go your way!" she said and left, her pigtails swinging.

I went home quickly. She did not come back. The neighbors asked me, "Why isn't Han with you? "

Mother scolded me. Her parents went to find her. When darkness fell, they came back. I went to her and said, "I am sorry."

She hugged me.

I will cherish this friendship forever.

A Moving Moment

A high school student got up at four-thirty AM. and packed a bag. Her parents' room was dark. She thought they were sleeping and didn't wake them. Nobody prepared her breakfast. She left home at five-fifteen AM without eating.

It was early. The sky was dark. And It was quiet in the little village, except for the squawks of chickens and her footsteps. She turned on her flashlight and walked to the bus station. The weather was cold. Her figures were stiff from the cold. She felt guilty and depressed.

When she reached the bus station, several students and their mothers were there. She felt lonely.

One mother said to her son, "You will spend almost two hours on the bus. Are you full? When you reach school, there will be no time to eat. Do you have enough clothes ? It will be very cold."

"I'm full. I'm OK. Please stop talking!" the boy said impatiently.

The mother stopped.

She was jealous of that boy. Suddenly her stomach churn. She put her hands on her belly. She smiled wryly and wondered at the pains. She had not eaten. The pain was sharp. She took a deep breath. Her face grew pale.

A student noticed and held her arm. "Thank you!" she said gratefully.

She drank a little hot water. She felt better. A girl said, "There is a woman."

She raised her head and looked. It was smoggy. The woman resembled her mother. The woman walked to her. The closer she came, the clearer her face. "Mom, why are you here?" she said incredibly.

"I found that you were gone when I woke up. I got out of bed and went into the kitchen. You didn't eat the food that I prepared at four AM. I brought some food, hot porridge, and meat pies. When

you get on the bus, eat them," she explained and gave her the food.

She said, "Mom, I am sorry. I shouldn't have quarreled with you last night. I thought that you would never forgive me. I didn't wake you up."

They hugged. The bus came. She said goodbye.

When she boarded the bus, she felt the heat of the food. It warmed her heart. She ate. The pies were the most delicious food that she had ever eaten. She burst into tears.



宁翰瑶

Ning Hanyao

Dorothy

Have you read *The Wizard of Oz*? Do you remember Dorothy? I am Dorothy, but not that girl from Kansas. I am a nineteen-year-old from Harbin. I don't have Toto, but I once had a little turtle whose death made me sad. I have never had such amazing experiences like those in "The Wizard of Oz", but I think everyone has interesting stories and is worth knowing.

I come from Harbin. Harbin is as cold as many think. Some think we stay at home in winter without going out until spring comes; our only transport is dog sledding, and there are fights between strangers if they look at each other for over three seconds. In fact, Harbin is similar to any other city in China. My hometown is beautiful, attractive, and distinctive.

Northerners speak Mandarin quite clearly. When I attended

college, most of my classmates said that I had a northeastern accent. We don't have our own dialect, but our accent is unique and interesting.

My hometown is far from here, so although I have lived an independent life for a semester, I still can't be accustomed to it completely. I do feel that I am witnessing my change and growth, and I am very happy for myself. I hope that I can adapt myself to school life as soon as possible, be determined to work hard and be less homesick. I don't want to make my future self-disappointed and regretful.

Cousin Conflicts

Di is the daughter of my aunt who is three years older than my mother. Yang Di is six years younger than me. Yang Di was born in the eighth year of Aunt's second marriage. Aunt had longed for a child so of course; her daughter was spoilt.

Cousin was a lovely child with big beautiful eyes, and deep dimples set in a round, chubby face. When she smiled, it seemed there was light in her eyes. Her voice was sweet and her parents gave her all they could. Dressed in beautiful, expensive clothes, she looked like a little princess. But when she speaks, you will find her appearance is an illusion.

After the junior high school entrance examination, my relatives came to congratulate me. When I heard an extremely loud knock at the door, I knew it was Yang Di. She didn't even say hello. Instead, she rummaged in my bag, making a lot of noise.

"I love your pen, you should give it to me," Yang Di said.

"You are too young to use a pen. My pen is a precious souvenir from my former teacher. Buy another one."

"I just want yours. I'll take it with me when I leave. You are my cousin so you must agree," she commanded.

I tried to control my temper, "Listen, I'm not your mother. I'm not obligated to meet all your needs, especially unreasonable ones!"

She cried loudly to attract my relatives' attention. It worked! Everyone accused me of being unreasonable.

I explained, "It's not my mistake! Why should I satisfy all her needs just because she is younger than me?"

Mom looked at me in a critical way and said, "You are her cousin. You are grown up. She is still naïve. Give the pen to her. I will buy you a new one."

"Other pens are different from this one!" I complained.

...

Finally, I agreed. I cried after Cousin left. I was so sad

because I felt nobody understood my feelings.

It was very childish of me. Today, I wouldn't argue with Cousin, even if I was angry.

In that conflict, both of Cousin and I were wrong. I shouldn't be childish and thoughtless. She shouldn't be unreasonable. I will get along with Cousin. We are relatives. The affection between us is critical. Tolerance and forgiveness can deal with conflicts in a proper way.

A Moment in My Life

The bell rang. It was finally over.

Parents swarmed at the school gate. With a crumpled leaflet in hand, Mother nervously waited.

Excitedly, madly, uncontrollably, I rushed out. I hugged my parents tightly and wailed, ignoring those around us. I had a drink of watermelon juice Mother had made. It was incredibly sweeter.

After calming down, I went back to school. Looking at the sunshine and the lush leaves, I felt my high school life was like a fast movie. I had looked forward to a day when I didn't have to attend school, but when it really came, my feelings were mixed.

Time for lunch, I went to the school canteen. I noticed something that I had never noticed before: the cooks' white clothes were yellow. Sometimes they didn't wear plastic gloves. The plates were greasy. It would be the last time I ate there. I finished all the soup in my bowl. Previously, I had considered it to be very salty.

I went to my classroom. It was empty and silent. A breeze wafted through the room. It blew curtains from one side to the other like flags flapping in the air. I smelt the fragrance of lilacs. I heard the leaves rustling in the wind. Birds twittered.

The instant I knew my high school life and torturous preparations for THE exam were over, my feelings were so complex that I can't begin to describe them. I was happy because I had finished the hardest part of my student life. I was excited because I would be a college freshman in a few months- something I had yearned for. I was regretful because I had neglected many beautiful and precious things. I had not formally expressed my gratitude to my teachers, friends, and parents. I was reluctant to do so because there were so many memories that I couldn't tear myself away from, I was upset because I had to leave this place and these people and move to another city.

The bell rang. This part of my life was now finished.

My Friend And I

I am in middle school. I have a good friend. Her name is Liu Tong. I want to buy a gift. Her birthday comes soon. I go to many shops. I think about a gift. She is important to me. I want to make her happy. I buy a gift. It is a beautiful notebook. I write something in the notebook. I write warm words. I draw some pictures. I tell her my true feelings. The notebook is beautiful. Our friendship is also beautiful. I give the notebook to her. She smiles happily.

"Thank you, I really like it! This is the best gift!" she says happily.

I leave.

Li Xiang is one of our classmates. She gives Liu Tong a gift, too. I come back in a few minutes. They don't see me. I listen.

"Oh, it's so nice of you! I like your gift best!" says Liu Tong.

Li Xiang says, "Really? Don't you like that notebook?"

"I don't like it very much. It's not useful to me. I really like your pen!" says Liu Tong.

I am behind the door. I am angry. I walk to Liu Tong. She is very surprised. Her face is red. She tries to explain. I don't listen.

"Why do you lie? You don't like it. Give it back. I feel really sad. Our friendship ends!" I say angrily.

"Please..."

I don't listen to her. I leave.

She sends me a letter. I don't read it. I put that letter away. We don't talk. She goes to another city. I am very surprised. I run home quickly. I find the letter. I read it. She says that she is sorry. Li Xiang is sad. Liu Tong just wants to make her happy. I am surprised.

I call Liu Tong. No one answers. She has a new phone number. I can't find her.

I lose my best friend. I feel sad. I feel sorry. I will not make this mistake again.



胡安琪

Hu Anqi

Caroline

I was born on 6 February 1998 in Wanzhou District, Chongqing. Chongqing is a major city in southwest China. Administratively, it is one of China's four direct-controlled municipalities. Chongqing is a mountain city. Influenced by the accumulation of geographical conditions and local culture, Chongqing people have good virtue in their nature, which consists of tenacity, optimism, boldness, openness, and tolerance. In 2017, I graduated from Wanzhou NO.2 Senior High School. I lived there until I came to Xi'an to go to college.

Although I am already an adult and a college student, shyness remains a big problem for me. Lack of knowledge, proper pronunciation and confidence, speaking aloud seem a bit awkward for me. However, after a semester of training and practicing, the situation has improved. At least I dare to speak. In the next four years, I wish I could grow up into a qualified citizen and teacher, mature both physical and mental.

Unforgettable Miss Harper

Back in 2010, I was a primary school student. When I first time began to learn English, I did poorly. My English teacher, Miss Zheng, was irresponsible. She looked patient but was actually impatient. Every time she walked into the classroom, she wore a wide confident smile accompanied by the brisk clicks of her high heels. It seemed she could handle everything. Due to class rules, our seats in the classroom were not fixed. When we began to learn phonetics, I, unfortunately, sat at the back of the classroom.

Children at that age are naughty and full of energy. The room was big so kids far from the podium enjoyed playing and making noise. Miss Zheng did nothing to stop this. Her teaching speed was so fast that half of the students didn't understand. Her poor pronunciation made it worse. It seemed that she ignored us, and talked to herself. "A, e, i, o, u. Again, a, e, i, o, u. Em, OK. Did you get it? OK, let's move on..."

Once I asked my desk mate, "You got an A? How did you learn English? I think it is difficult. I don't even know how to pronounce the words!"

"It is easy if you know some knacks."

"So how do you remember the pronunciation?"

She said proudly, "You can use Chinese characters or Pinyin as phonetic symbols. Here are my notes."

"Oh, brilliant! How clever!"

We used this method to learn English for a whole semester. I learned nothing. On the final exam, I got a B. In China, it is a shame for a primary school student not to get an A plus. Learning my English score, Mother asked, "What's wrong with you? How could you get a B on a primary school exam? Did you put your heart into the study? Or did you follow the bad guys and ruin yourself?" Mother's angry voice trembled.

I explained, "I memorized the lessons, but I didn't understand what she taught."

Mother threw my textbook to the ground and found my notes. She pointed at them, "This is how you learn English?"

"My English teacher taught so fast. All my classmates were doing this. It worked!" I cried.

Mother then took me to an extracurricular class, which is where I met Miss Harper. I can only remember her English name. She was a beautiful, gentle Chinese lady who worked at the training institute. She was slim, short, kind, and considerate. Her soft voice sounded like an angel's.

"Hello. Come in! Don't be shy. Just you and me are here," she said slowly. "My English name is Harper. Just call me Harper. What is your English name?"

Feeling ashamed of my pronunciation, I said in a low voice. "My-my name is-s Hu Anqi."

Realizing my shyness and fears, she spent time talking to me alone to build up my trust and confidence.

"Oh, what a beautiful name!" she said cheerfully. "Your pronunciation is good. Have you got an English name?"

"No," I responded.

"We are going to take an English journey, and everybody needs an English name to represent themselves. Let's find a unique name for you. Any ideas?"

I replied, "No."

She thought for a short moment, "What about Anna? It's easy to remember and sounds like your lovely Chinese name."

"Em, thank you," I answered.

We talked for a bit and got to know each other better.

She had passed TEM-8 and used common words to explain abstract concepts. Compared to my primary school teacher, she was responsible, patient, and answered all my questions; even the strange ones. I asked, "What are the English phonetic symbols? Why do we have to learn it? What are they for?"

She smiled, "English phonetic symbols are just like Pinyin, but they only work for the English language. Every language has its own phonetic system. You don't have to know more. Just accept them as your mother language."

During her lessons, she maintained discipline and made sure everyone in the classroom listened and understood. Everyone had a chance to speak and ask questions. Games and activities helped me develop an interest in English. This was much more important than memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. I regained confidence, established a passion for English. I determined to be an English teacher as a career.

Miss Harper was just like a gardener. She removed my weak parts and planted new hope. She not only taught academic knowledge but also the proper attitudes and characters to face the life challenges. I have never thought a person except family could have such a significant impact on one's life.

I am proud to have achieved my dream of being an English major. I hope I can do as well as Miss Harper. Professional skills are vital, but a sense of duty is also key. It's easy to be an English teacher, but not a qualified, respectable one. Having a significant, positive influence on students, is a lifetime work.

My Story

My name is Hu Anqi. There is an episode about my given name. During the first few months of her pregnancy, Mother had chosen two names for her baby. In China, it is illegal to detect the sex of the fetus. So, one name is for a boy, and the other name, Yuxuan, is for a girl. Just one week before my birth, the girl's name had been used by Mother's colleague, which left Mother a serious task. The most satisfying name had been "robbed", and Mother wanted a unique one. She had to consider again. One day Mother was watching TV. A scene caught her eyes. There were angels protecting a baby. Mother was excited, "I may call her Anqi. Hope angels always watch and protect her." So, I got my given name in a hasty situation.

I come from Chongqing, famous for its food's spicy taste. Most people are familiar with Chongqing hot pot and believe Chongqingers can eat super spicy food. They cannot live without spicy food, just like fish cannot be without water. This isn't always right. Take me as an example. All my family members are natives. But my family tradition is a bit weird in someone's eyes. We can't stand the super spicy taste, and eating spicy food isn't our first choice. Every time I tell it to others, they will be shocked a lot. Today, more and more people are following a healthier eating style – light flavor. My family is a loyal follower of it. This teaches me an important lesson – never think about something subjectively.

I live with my parents and grandparents. Due to the one-child policy, I am an only child. So, I am put in the center of my family, which means I get the most love, and I am expected to be more excellent. Unlike some outgoing children, I prefer things that can be done indoors. Maybe there is a connection between my characters. I am shy and sensitive. Before high school, I often cried for the unpleasant things. Sometimes I dared not to speak the true feelings. In addition, I am a slow learner. It takes me more time to take in the knowledge. All these factors had a negative influence on

my study. As an average student, it was hard to gain the teachers' attention. Therefore, Mother and Father worried a lot.

Fortunately, I have met some great persons in my growing processes, such as Miss Harper and my high school teachers. They reshaped my characters and guided me in the right direction. These experiences show me the significance of a man's influence on a child or a teenager. There is a famous idea - educate people first and teach later. I couldn't agree more. If people miss their critical period to cultivate characters and manners, they may live with regret for the rest day. Therefore, try to be a helpful disseminator and make as much dedication as you can to contribute to society. Believe it or not, your little action may light the whole world of a lost kid.

One Moment

I'd never given much thought to how I would walk into that "room".

It was early summer, but you would never feel easy. The glare, the heat of the burning sun, and the humidity could kill people.

It was 7:50 in the morning. Stepping out of a taxi, I arrived at the school gate. A large crowd of mostly parents had gathered, murmuring. I could make out some of their conversations, adding to my tension. I tried to ignore what they were talking about. However, I couldn't control myself, naively thinking I might hear something useful.

As tradition dictated, Mother gave me a small bottle of glucose injection fluid. People believe it can replenish energies. It was so sweet that I coughed, and only finished half of it. A trickle of cold liquid went down my esophagus, both distracting and calming me.

Now it was 8:00. I had to go. I entered the school and looked back. Outside the gate, among hundreds of longing eyes, I found my parents. I forced a confident smile to comfort them. I was utterly terrified.

It was 8:10. I joined my class on the playground. Teachers wore the same red clothes – meant to wish us luck. Classmates greeted with smiles and encouragement.

I stood there, having nothing else to do. My blank brain was full of fears of bad consequences.

Suddenly, my stomach heaved. I wanted to vomit, but I had nothing to throw up. I had eaten little for breakfast. Still, something was surging in my innards.

The temperature was rising. The hot, humid air suffocated me. I could hardly breathe. I was dizzy. I wanted to cry and even came up with a crazy idea to give up and escape.

It was 8:30 a.m., April seventh, 2017, the first day of the

Gaokao, the most important exam for students in China. It decides millions of futures. A student's high score adds to their family's social status. I am an only child, so my family put all their expectations on me. I am aware of my heavy responsibility. I was not permitted to lose this battle.

Sometimes, life is like a journey with no retreat. It is better to face it rather than escape.

Today was my destiny, like 9.4 million other teenagers in China. I had to face the Gaokao.

I took several deep breaths. With sweaty hands and trembling body, I walked into the examination room.



张书薇

Zhang Shuwei

Vera

I was born on 12 October 1999 in Dazhou, which is famous for its natural gas and olive oil. My hometown is a small town near Chongqing. I spent my childhood and primary school time there. My senior middle school is Mianyang Middle School Talent School. And in 2017, I graduated from Mianyang Middle School. Because I met many excellent teachers in high school, and they had a great impact on me, I have decided that I want to be a teacher in the future.

I hope to be able to finish my studies in college and be brave enough to try new things and to overcome my fears and concerns.

An Encounter

My first experience of taking a bus alone was when I was eleven years old. It was a hot afternoon. I got on the bus and found a seat. I felt sleepy and muddled.

Soon I heard, "Little girl! Wake up!"

When I opened my eyes I found a woman in front of me. She was middle-aged and a little fat. She looked kind and gentle. Her appearance reminded me of one of my neighbors.

I asked, "Excuse me, where am I? I want to go to Yongxing Town. Am I there?"

She laughed and said, "No, you got on the wrong bus. You should take a bus going in the opposite direction."

I almost cried out in anxiety. I said, "Oh no! I have no money to buy another ticket!"

The woman patted my head and said, "Don't worry. I will help you." Then she got me off the bus and then took me to another bus station. We waited a few minutes. When my bus came again, she bought me the right ticket and asked the bus conductor to remind me when I arrived.

In the end, she said, "Don't oversleep when you take a bus alone and keep careful." Then she left.

Finally, I succeeded in reaching my destination. I will always remember the stranger.

My Past Life

I am Vera, a student from class six. I was born in a small town in Sichuan. There are seven people in my family. My grandparents have two kids. The two kids have one child each. We lived together.

Before I was six, my parents worked in different towns. I could meet them once a month. I was raised by my grandparents. But my grandfather prefers my cousin to me, just because he is a boy. He treated me and my cousin differently. For example, he never gave me pocket money but my cousin could ask him for the money. What's more, I could not eat snacks and drinks he bought for my cousin. But my grandmother really loves me. She is the only person in the family who is kind to me. But she did not dare to resist my grandfather. When I got to the age of primary school, my mother found that my grandfather treated me unfairly. So, she changed her workplace and started raising me personally.

My parents sent me to a private junior high school in another city in Sichuan because the education level there was higher than that in my hometown. I started my boarding life. I learned to live without my parents' help. I can only go home once every semester.

The relationship between me and my family is not very close. When I started junior high school, I often feel inferior. I thought my classmates knew a lot of things I didn't. My class teacher and I come from the same place. She noticed my worries and encouraged me. In the second year of junior high school, my grandmother was found to have heart disease. I often went home from school because of her illness. She didn't get well until I went to high school. Meanwhile, my grades were getting worse and worse.

I spent my junior high and high school in the same city. Grandmother died in my sophomore year. I was very sad. She wanted me to be a teacher. When I was in high school, I met a lot of excellent teachers, so I chose a normal school after the college entrance examination. I hope that I can be like them in the future and can have a positive impact on my students.

A Rainy Night

Mother and I were climbing a mountain one rainy, dark night. Although we had umbrellas, we both were wet. Our flashlight could not illuminate the narrow mountain road. It was hard for us to find the right direction.

The mountain road was muddy. I took a deep breath, trying to keep my balance. Unluckily I plopped into the mud. A pain in my foot made me cry. Mother called my name. I could not answer, because my mouth was full of mud. I tasted the earth. It was not good at all. The rain grew heavier and heavier. Thunder boomed. Mother pulled me up and picked up my umbrella and flashlight.

"Are you ok? Do you want to go back?"

I paused and I replied, "No, I can make it."

We continued our climb. The rain pelted me. I was really cold. I walked by Mother to keep warm. It was very quiet as the thunder died away. We were getting ever nearer to our destination.

The rain stopped. The sky grew brighter. My face and clothes were covered with mud. I was a mess, but I was in a good mood. I could smell mud and grass. Grass and budding flowers stood upright on the roadside. Birds sang in the woods.

At last, we reached our destination, the mountaintop. Many people there shared our purpose. At first, we could only see brightening clouds. Then the sun revealed itself. We were all amazed. This magnificent, impressive spectacle was why we climbed the mountain in the rain.

It was worth it.



王西茹

Wang Xiru

Bonnie

I was born in 1999 in Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province. I live in a small village but it is very beautiful. People there are so kind.

I was brought up by my grandparents. My grandfather was a teacher. I have enjoyed reading since I was a little girl. I major in English, but I love politics and history very much. Reading makes me find inner peace and forget many troubles. My favorite poet is Hai Zi. I love the *guzheng*, a traditional Chinese instrument of infinite grace. However, I am not good at it. I will keep learning it and I'm sure I can play it very well someday.

I'm not an ambitious person. I just want to be a good English teacher, with a happy family and a peaceful life.

Grandpa and Me

There are many left-behind children in China. I was one of them. I don't know if living with my maternal grandparents made me lucky. My feelings about Grandpa is complicated.

Mother is Grandfather's favorite daughter. Grandpa didn't like my father, because my paternal grandmother lied to Grandpa that Father was rich. Before my parents married, Father pretended to be gentle. But after getting married, Mother discovered that Father was very poor. What's worse, Father was moody, which made Grandfather very angry. He often said that Father was a big liar. My parents went to a big city to earn a living and I was left with my grandparents.

I didn't know what Grandpa thought about me. Sometimes he was very kind but sometimes he would say, "You are just like your father! He always brings trouble to others!"

I was very sad, I didn't know why I was to blame.

I have an uncle whose son is four years older than me. Grandfather loved my cousin more than me. My cousin often bullied me. When I reported this to Grandpa, he would say, "If you didn't annoy him, why would he bully you?"

I would become very frustrated, "I did nothing wrong. He bullied me at first."

"You are a girl. You should be tolerant."

I wanted to say more, but I didn't when I saw his serious face. Nobody knew how much I wanted to cry.

One winter holiday, Cousin hadn't finished his homework. He was forced to stay at home to finish it. After a bit, I found Cousin had sneaked out of the house. Then, I heard him whispering: "Cousin, come here!"

"What's the matter?" I replied.

"I borrowed a friend's homework and I want you to copy it for me."

"You can't copy others' homework. If Grandpa knows this,

he will beat you." I said.

"If you don't help me, my teacher will punish me. If you don't help me, I will beat you."

Then I agreed. I didn't want him to be punished and I was afraid that he would beat me.

When grandpa checked his homework and found it was not my cousin's handwriting.

"Who wrote the homework for you? " he asked angrily.

"My cousin," Cousin answered, fearfully.

"Why did she do this for you?" Grandpa asked.

I will never forget what my cousin said next, "she said if I gave her five yuan, she would write it for me."

Grandpa looked at me and slapped my face.

I cried, "Why do you trust him instead of me? He forced me to do his homework. And I ..."

"You are just like your father! Both of you are liars!"

I cried loudly and rushed out of the house.

Sometimes, Grandpa treated me very well. When I was sick, he carried me on his back to a doctor. And he would cook what I liked when I got high marks.

Now, Grandpa is 65. I want to forget those unhappy things. I will cherish his kindness to me.

An Unforgettable Experience

I'm not a bad child. But I make mistakes sometimes.

A villager has a fruit tree. I love eating fresh fruit. It is in May. Some children want to steal fruit. I join them. We pass fields and a river. We walk and then see a tree. "Oh! So much fruit!" we shout joyfully.

None of us can climb the tree. We shake it. Some fruit falls. We laugh even louder. A dog begins to bark. The dog is in the owner's yard.

A man comes "What are you doing?" he shouts.

He is tall and strong. We run away. I run home. I feel worried.

Next morning, Grandma wakes me up. She says angrily, "Who teaches you to steal things? Tell me! Shame on you!" Her eyes turn red.

I am afraid. I begin to cry and run away. I hate that bad man. He must know me. Why must he tell this to Grandma? I am a little child. I just steal some fruit. I must find him.

I go to the big tree. He doesn't come. I keep waiting. Then I feel tired. I sleep under the tree. After a while, someone wakes me up. I open my eyes. It is Grandma!

"Why are you here?" she asks.

"I want to find that bad man," I say.

"Why?" Grandma asks.

I look at her. I say, "He tells you I steal fruit. You are unhappy. I hate him."

"Does he come?" Grandma says.

"No," I shake my head.

Grandma laughs. "The man does nothing wrong," she says.

"He is selfish. I just steal some fruit," I say.

Grandma says, "I want you to be honest. So does he. He helps you to be honest."

I am touched, "Sorry, Grandma. I know I am wrong. I hope you can forgive me."

She smiles. I know she can forgive me. We go home happily.

I often talk about this with Grandma.

A Moment in My Life

I was sitting at the desk, staring at the fragrant French fries in front of me. A gleam of inner struggle came into my eyes.

Then, I put a French fry into my mouth. But it seemed to get stuck in my throat and I couldn't swallow it, no matter how hard I tried. At this time, my eyes were brimming with tears. There was a bitter taste in my mouth. My face turned very red.

One of my roommates came up to me, "Are you okay?"

"Leave me alone, please!" I shouted.

I was surprised by my response. Why did I lose temper? But I was so irritable. The boy's disappointed face emerged in my mind.

Then, I was angry with myself and ready to throw the fries in the trash. But I didn't.

"Why didn't you give the fries to the little boy?" A voice came into my mind, "He came to buy fries for two days. But every time he came, the fries have been sold out. Why did you finally take the last fries away? If you had left him fries, you would not feel so guilty now."

Then, another voice arouses from my heart, "But you had paid before him. You don't need to feel guilty. And you have gone back to the canteen to found him."

Before this condemnation, I really had decided to look for the little boy in the canteen with the French fries. There had been students on the way in twos and threes. Sometimes I had run into one of them, but I had continued to rush to the canteen without apologizing.

I had felt so disappointed when I found no trace of him in the canteen.

Then I had to return my dormitory. That was why I felt so disappointed at the beginning of the story. (322 words)



可心

Lei Kexin

Kathy

I am Lei Kexin. Mom just came up with my name by accident. When I still in Mom's belly, she looked up in the dictionary to kill time and found Kexin suddenly. She thought it is such a sweet name and is perfect for a girl because she also wanted me to be sweet. My English name is Kathy. I named it myself because I think it bears a striking resemblance to my Chinese name. I come from Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province.

I have a small family of my father, my mother, and me. My father is a worker and my mother is a Chinese teacher. Of my hobbies, I love playing tennis best. Playing sports can keep me fit and make me feel fulfilled. In my spare time, I enjoy watching English movies and listening to English songs, which arouse my interest in English learning.

I am steady, practical, diligent and hard-working. It is the second semester, I am sure I will try my best to make full use of the time to cultivate myself.

My Father

My father is of medium height and medium weight. He is a worker and is not strict at all. He couldn't be more ordinary, but he taught me lots of things.

I was in primary school; my father had a terrible car accident that almost killed him. He had a cerebral hemorrhage and broke six ribs. Fortunately, he survived, and when I asked him what was going through his mind as he faced death, he said all he could think of was needing to live, so he could be there for my mother and me. This gave him the will to fight for life. When he went under anesthesia for an emergency instead of counting backward from ten, he repeated our names. He wanted our names to be the last words he spoke on earth if he died. Lying there facing death, he had a reason to live: love. I was really moved when I heard what he said. His sense of belonging within his family, his purpose as a dad, repeating our names are the reasons he survived.

My father is a tough, strong man. When I faced difficulties, I recall this powerful experience with my father and remind to be brave.

My Mother

I grow older and I understand Mother better and I appreciate her more each day. She does not change, but I do. Mom is slim and she has long curly brown hair which makes her look younger and more beautiful. She is near-sighted, but she only wears glasses when she needs to. She thinks glasses make her ugly.

Mother is strict. She is strict with me, especially my study. I hated her at times when I was a child. When I didn't want to study hard, she said, "Kid, I ask you to study hard because I hope you will have the right to choose meaningful work and not be forced to do a job just to make a living. When your work is meaningful, you will have a sense of accomplishment. When your work gives you time and doesn't deprive you of your life, you will have dignity. The sense of accomplishment and dignity will give you happiness."

At that time, I didn't totally understand this. I just thought, how annoying Mom is!

During adolescence, I often had conflicts with Mother. She forced me to sleep before ten-thirty PM. When I had not finished my homework, she would say, "If you don't sleep now, you won't grow taller. You can get up early and finish your homework."

"I don't want to get up early, I just want to do it now. I don't care whether I am tall or not."

She would then beat me until I stopped crying and apologized for my mistakes. I didn't think it was my fault. I thought she didn't understand me and that it was wrong to use violence to educate me. But later, I started to better understand Mother. She didn't want to give me a lot of pressure, she just wanted me to be a perfect daughter and a perfect person.

She cares about me a lot. When I was in middle school, I was often ill because of the pressure. Mother and Father had to pick me up from school and were with me in the hospital until I recovered. At that time, Mom said, "I really don't care about your grades and ranking in your class. You don't have to be so stressed out, I just

want you to be happy and healthy. From that day on, I felt more relaxed and made progress in my study. The relationship between Mother and me improved because I thought she understood and cared about me.

Mother is also a great Chinese language teacher. She is strict with her students, and her class is always the best. Every year, many students come to my home to visit her. I am so proud of Mother and I just want to be a great teacher like her. She is my model and example, so that's why I chose this university and this major.

Mother and I are friends and share everything: my college life, study, boyfriend, and so on. I really appreciate having such a wonderful mother who gives me lots of useful suggestions and deeply affects me in my life.

My Moment

A sixteen-year-old sat in the classroom quietly. She thought of the boy and smiled shyly, secretly. Why? Was it strange?

I was a senior high school student. I am of medium height and medium weight. Except for big watery eyes, I am nothing special. I am shy and usually quiet.

Well, things changed. The first day of school, I met Han Le in my class. Something in his dazzling eyes attracted me. He is handsome, has big eyes, long eyelashes, a sharp-pointed nose, and a muscular body. He is warm, friendly, and eager to help others. He always gives me a comfortable feeling. I started observing him secretly. Even my best friend didn't realize that I had my eyes on him.

When he studied in the classroom, his eyebrows knitted in concentration. Sometimes he wrote hard with his pen. How serious and careful!

He answered the teachers' questions with near-perfect answers in a powerful voice!

He played basketball. He avoided the other players and scored a 3-pointer. Everyone cheered. I really admired him!

One day, I collected homework. Suddenly, a boy knocked me down in the corridor. The papers scattered. The boy ran away, leaving me alone.

I thought, "How could he be so rude! He is not a gentleman at all!" Seeing the papers covering the floor and knowing I needed to send them to the teacher's office quickly, I was quite desperate.

Han Le came and said charmingly, "Don't worry! I will help you."

I looked at his dazzling eyes. I flipped. He helped me collect the papers. I was totally moved.

From that moment on, I smiled shyly and secretly when I thought of his name.

How sweet! Because I knew the most important thing at that age was to study hard and get into a wonderful university. However, I kept this feeling inside my heart without telling anybody.



邱益宁
Qiu Yining
Eve

My name is Qiu Yining. I come from Ningbo, Zhejiang. I was born on June 14th, 1999. I love learning languages. My hobbies are swimming, playing the guitar and going hiking. I love all kinds of music. My dream is to teach students to learn languages more easily with happiness.

Zongyou

My cousin is six months older than me. Our appearance and personality are similar. Many people think we have the same mother. Zongyou, "protected by the ancestors," often acts like he is younger than me. Anyhow, he protects me without hesitation in the face of danger.

He is about 1.7 meters tall and has a crew cut. Once he smiles or laughs, his face shape becomes roundish and nobody connects him with anything negative.

Our homes were near each other before I was ten. Later Zongyou moved to Hunan because of his parents' jobs. During the summer of 2009, I spent 3 months in Hunan with Zongyou in a village near Dongting Lake.

Grandpa's birthday was approaching. We two were sent to the lake to pick lotus pods to make a special local tea. Suddenly Zongyou saw a boat.

"Look, Ning, there's a boat with oars. And it's empty!" he said.

I instantly knew what he wanted, "I'm not interested in rowing, it's super tiring," I exclaimed.

"Oh please, please! I promise it will be fun. Don't you want to know what's on that eyot?"

I knew that eyot. We could see it from the summit of hills next to the lake every day. It resembled a lion. We were very curious about it.

"Fine." I jumped into the boat and we began rowing.

An old saying goes, "Looking at mountains from a distance kills a horse." When I was a child I didn't know the meaning.

"I can't row anymore, my arms ache!" I shouted.

"Mine too! But once we stop, we waste all our previous efforts!" replied Zongyou.

"But it's getting dark! Today's Grandpa's birthday. If we destroy it, we'll be beaten to death!"

After several seconds, Zongyou's loud voice said again, "Screw it! We can run away!"

Finally, we reached the lion eyot. Exhausted and hungry, we ate all of the lotus seeds.

"Now we are bound to die here. Nobody can help us and I can't row another centimeter." Zongyou exclaimed.

"Oh, if you die, I'll eat your body so I can live longer!" I said giggling.

Then he thought for a while. "No, you die first. You're a girl and you're not as strong as me. And after that, maybe I can lie above your body and pretend you are a bed."

"I'm skinny, you'll break my bones!"

"But you have are already dead!"

"But it hurts!"

We continued the "death talk" for long. Suddenly, we saw a group of boats coming. People were yelling our names.

After returning home, Zongyou said to the elders that it was he who had forced me to go rowing. He picked punishments which were much harsher than mine. I saw him kneeling outside the gate with a bare upper body and no shoes. He winked at me. I rushed into the kitchen to steal a piece of watermelon for him.

My Unique Life Story

Naming me was hard for my parents. As far as I know, both had difficulty in choosing. At last, they put down the dictionary and named me "Yining," which is a combination of names of their hometowns, Yiyang and Ningbo.

When I was a child, I had a boyish character and figure. I felt happy playing with boys. Things seemed quite good at that time. However, as I grew up, and my hair got longer, I looked more and more feminine. The problem was that I kept my boyish character, and preferred to chat and play with boys.

Boys in junior high schools are energetic and experience the first awakening of love. Looking back, I was matured late. I didn't understand the meaning of love between men and women. Also, I didn't know a girl who usually stayed with a boy would be considered his girlfriend.

Before long, boys realized I was happy staying with any one of them. They felt angry and started to call me "bitch." They tore my homework in half, which I had spent hours to finish. Then they threw my coat into black, dirty water.

Till now, I don't understand what my fault was. Maybe I was poor at taking hints. And not everyone's love and kindness are for free.

It was a painful experience to be bullied. And now, trusting a male, except my father, is almost impossible for me.

My deskmate in senior high school, Ma Qian, was also my classmate in junior high school. She has narrow eyes and full lips — a traditional Chinese look. She was meek and shy like a deer. When I was bullied by boys in junior high school, she used to say something mean to me. But that's better than what other girls did. She also wanted to please the boys.

I knew about her before we became deskmates. Then I realized, this little quiet girl had many wonderful thoughts. She held the opinion that love could stay alive without marriage. She told me

there were many traditional Chinese customs that shouldn't have been abandoned. For instance, ancient Chinese used to *qingan* to the elders in the morning. However, we are too busy to even say good morning to our parents. That makes the relationship between parents and children weaker.

Qian was also selfless. She helped me with my study, especially in Chinese and English. Thanks to her influence, I read many books and magazines, and she also raised my interest in movies. She is now studying at the Dalian University of Foreign Languages.

During the summer of 2017, I stayed at my uncle's house in Yiyang for a month. I spent a lot of time with my dear cousin, Zongyou. He is six months older than me. Our appearance and personality are similar. Many people think we have the same mother.

He is about 1.7 meters in height and has a crew cut. He has an angular face and prominent cheekbones. He doesn't like to laugh and often gives a serious look. However, once he smiles or laughs, his face shape becomes roundish, which is really cute.

We traveled around Hunan. One night, I was in a hotel and he was having a party with his high school mates. Suddenly the electricity went off. At that time, I was having a shower. I was scared and rushed out to call my cousin. Surprisingly, he showed up within ten minutes. When I saw him, he was communicating with the manager with his T-shirt wet with sweat. Something suddenly occurred to me. I was so moved by the fact that I deserved to be treated with kindness and cared for by a boy, even if I had paid him nothing.

I have a unique life, and I believe it's important. It is exactly what I have experienced and suffered that makes me who I am. I appreciate everyone that I have met in my life because it is you who make up the concept of human-beings in my mind and help build my unique little world.

A Ceremony

It was the first time. My nose was more sensitive than ever before. At first, I smelt winter - a mix of ice and water. It was not that cold but could remain at zero degrees for a long time. I was enlivened and just wanted to smell more.

I saw the fire in front of my face. It bent down, smiling at the virginal animal. A deal was made. It whispered to a bundle of wood. Another secret deal. It grew taller and taller, stronger and stronger.

I heard a familiar sound. You spread butter on slices of meat and put them in a hot frying pan. Like that. Smoke wafted, with a special fragrance, wafting on the edge of life. It was the beginning of a ceremony, the end of a long journey.

My ears heard soundless struggling, mixed with the happiness of devotion, and eagerness to see the terminus. So far away. Somewhere in the sky. The color of the animal over the fire was getting darker and darker. I was smelling wood, ice, and life.

The high point of the ceremony came with lard, salt, pepper, and more lard. They were on their way to express everything to the gods, representing the awe of a wise species.

Only if I could say something.

Say something to the gods.

I couldn't.

I was an insignificant, single member of a species. But a very special species. We regard food as holy charity from gods. We appreciated it. We don't take it for granted.

I saw food. I saw a twisting corpse. I smelt death and life. It was so happy for the animal running among the unspoiled mountains. It was horrible to be cut into pieces and roasted over a fire. The animal was a gift from nature.

In my backyard, I controlled everything. I didn't. It was not me. It was human nature. My feeling was changing, but my thankfulness didn't change for a second.

I tasted the roast meat, the leftovers of offerings to the gods.

I swallowed the spirit of fire, the words of gods, the wishes of life. They became an eternal fire burning in my heart.



王琰琦

Wang Yanqi

Ivin

My name is Wang Yanqi. Ivin is my English name, which is also the name of my idol. I was born on 28 January 2000 in Weifang, Shandong Province. I lived in Weifang for seventeen years since I was born.

I really love my hometown, which is commonly known as "the Capital of Kites." Every year from April 20th to 25th, many people from more than 30 countries come to the kite square to see various kites. Yi Mountain is a famous tourist destination in my hometown. Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty once climbed the mountain and prayed at the peak.

I have many hobbies. Working out at the gym regularly lets me enjoy good health. Swimming is the exercise I do most often. In addition, I'm fond of playing the erhu. Furthermore, making cakes

and desserts is my forte. In my free time, I often visit flower shops and buy flowers to practice flower arrangement.

Now, I am a college student majoring in English. I would like to be an English teacher to help others master English. I know that learning a foreign language is a long, difficult process. The most important thing is to keep practicing. I hope to increase my interest and improve my English skills. I'm sure I will make progress!

Mother

There is no doubt that parents love us the most in the world, they give us lives and nurse us to be independent people. No matter what difficulties we face, they are always behind us and offer support. With their support, we will be strong, no matter how hard the life is.

My mother is forty-five years old. She is slim, pretty and has short black hair. She has a round face and bright, big eyes. Although she is only 160 centimeters tall and weighs fifty kilograms, she radiates power when she walks. She likes wearing beautiful dresses that compliment her fine figure.

I admire Mother because she is a good mother and a great teacher. She is patient and smiles while talking. She teaches me how to think independently and helps me to build self-confidence. When I have difficulties in my study, Mum encourages me until I solve the problem. When I'm feeling sad or bad, she looks after me with care.

I got a really bad grade during a mock exam when I was in Grade Three of high school. I said to Mother, "I am very disappointed with myself."

"Failure isn't scary," Mother said, "it's scary that not to learn from it."

"I'm afraid that I will fail the college entrance exam just like the mock exam."

Mother said, "The mock exam before the college entrance exam is a good time to find mistakes. Correct your mistakes and you'll make progress. Relax, I'll be with you," she said and smiled.

Mother is not very beautiful, but I admire and love her.

Teacher

Being a teacher is always believed to be one of the greatest occupations in the world because they educate students to be better people and contribute to the world.

I have met so many teachers in my life. They have exerted enormous influence on my life. However, one of my most impressive teachers is Mrs. Zhang.

The first time I heard of Mrs. Zhang from my mother, she said Mrs. Zhang was very strict and it was not easy to be her student. Fortunately, I got the opportunity to enter her class in Grade Three of high school. And I was lucky that she chose me as her class representative.

I worked harder at math and spent a lot of time doing exercises. As a regular visitor to the math teacher's office, I asked her many questions. Because of Mrs. Zhang's high level of teaching, I never felt sleepy and all the students were focused during her class. To my delight, my math scores greatly improved. In the end, I got satisfactory results in the college entrance examination.

When talking about the teachers, most people will think about these familiar words "you are the worse students that I have ever taught, and the other class is much better than yours" and so on. This is the classic memories for many people. When they look back on those days, they can't help laughing out.

Teachers are the loveliest people in the world. Though they often criticize their students, they actually give them high comments when they talk to others. They just want the students not to be arrogant and keep making progress.

Even though I have graduated now, I still keep in touch with Mrs. Zhang. Because of her encouragement and love, I become better. Whenever I miss her, I feel happy and strong.

A False Alarm

She works in her office. The phone jangles. Something must have happened. She feels a sudden flutter. She sits in her chair a bit longer.

She stands up and pulls on her coat. Dizziness embraces her. Her sweetheart is calling.

She calms down, picks up the phone, and dials. She calls people who might help. Her husband is away on business. Her mother comes to her home to help look after her sweetheart. Her mother says that no one was at her home when she got there.

She feels worse and restless. She leaves the office in a hurry after asking permission from her boss. She walks down the sidewalk, not knowing where to go.

From a bakery comes the scent of freshly baked bread. Some children stand inside. Is her sweetheart buying bread? She sheds tears of sorrow.

Sitting on a bench, she takes a deep breath and tries to control herself. She comforts herself that everything is just fine.

It has been almost two hours since she got the phone call. It is now dark. She has been to all the places she thinks she should go. She has found not a trace.

Her body trembles. She can hardly stand. Her mind is snapping. The telephone bleeps again and again. She is not getting the message she wants.

Her feet take her home without her knowledge. "All right, home," she says.

She drags her tired self inside. She smells food. Her mother has cooked. The food is so bitter. She can hardly swallow. She drinks from a cup and her stomach aches.

She goes to her room. The door is locked. She hesitates and then uses a key to open it.

The door swings open.

A little girl sleeps soundly on the bed, tightly embracing a make-up box.



陈敏君

Chen Minjun

Clara

My Chinese name is Chen Minjun, and my English name is Clara. There is something interesting about my name. My Chinese name was given by my aunt. She wanted me to be an outstanding person. My English name is the same as my favorite character's name. I want to be a brave and smart girl like her. I was born on 22 August 1998. I am outgoing and warm-hearted. My hometown is the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It is a wonderful place. You can enjoy delicious food and great scenery here.

In my spare time, I'd love to read books and listen to music. They are my biggest hobbies. I think books are the treasure of knowledge. When I feel tired, I enjoy music. It can relax my spirit.

As a freshman, I am studying at Shanxi Normal University now. Facing the new life in the university, I feel a bit difficult to acclimate. The university is a little society. I can get experience in the study as well as life. Although there will be a number of difficulties, I will overcome them.

My Mother

Mother is forty-four years old. An ordinary office worker, she has long curly hair and bright eyes. She is tall, slim, and beautiful.

Mother and I have the same Chinese Zodiac sign, which means that she is twenty-four years older than me. However, others think we are sisters when we are out together. The reason is that she spends a lot of time dressing herself up in a fashionable way. Most of my clothes are chosen by her. I trust her appreciation of beauty.

With hot weather coming, I called Mother. "Hello," I said. "Last year, when I came to Xi'an, I didn't know the weather was hotter than in Xinjiang. I just brought a few thin clothes. I don't have enough clothes to wear. Now, the weather is hotter and I can hardly stand it. Please buy some for me."

"OK. I will do that. What style do you want?" she replied happily.

"You decide. I trust you. Please also buy some shoes," I said quickly.

"Okay," she said and hung up.

A few days later, she called back and said, "Dear, I bought some T-shirts, skirts, and one pair of shoes for you."

"Thank you," I replied happily.

However, when I got the parcel, I was surprised.

"Mom! What did you buy? The patterns of the clothes suggest that I am fat. The shoes are also disappointing."

"My dear, all those designs are in fashion now," she said.

I could only accept it. First, Mom had bought them and it was inconvenient to return them. It was my fault. I would have bought clothes by myself instead of bothering Mom just for convenience.

I learned a lot from this little thing. Mother can't make decisions for me forever. I need to learn to depend on myself.

A Heavy Snow

Our community is on the hillside. It is a disaster when it snows. Because there will be traffic jams. I still remember the morning I was trapped in the school because of the heavy snow.

It was the final sprint of the third year of senior high school. I came to school as usual. When we started classes, I glimpsed the snow outside. I took it for granted and continued to study. The snow didn't stop falling until noon. When we went for lunch, the snow was almost four centimeters deep so that a lot of students slipped on the way to the canteen. Several students even fall off on the ice.

In the afternoon, things got worse. The snow was so heavy that the snow cleaning couldn't clean it. At the same time, the radio broadcasted that the government would take the traffic control measures in the evening because of the snow on the roads. The school informed us that students would rest in the afternoon and we had better go back home as soon as possible. What good news!

Unfortunately, the snow was so heavy that the buses couldn't arrive on time. Some buses even stopped running. My home was far from school than any others. The only bus to my home was trapped on the halfway. As my classmates left on buses and one by one, I dropped into desperation. I walked along the road and sobbed. Heaven always leaves a door open. A kind aunt gave me a lift. Finally, I reached home safely.

There are good people in life after all. They will give you a hand when you are in trouble. I believe that the kindness is the biggest present.

The Reply

She waited for a reply. She realized that it was impulsive, but she asked. The reply may be not what she wanted.

She was too exhausted to say a word. What happened today had hurt her so she just wanted to find a sense of security. She asked the question directly. The reply may be not what she wanted. She wouldn't regret it.

Her legs were too weak to support her. She flopped into the chair with a sigh of relief.

"Relax," she said to herself.

It didn't work. After a while, she felt that her shirt was soaked with sweat. It became hotter. She opened the electric fan. The sound made her more anxious.

It was a waste of time. Why not go out and enjoy some ice cream? The ice cream was cold enough to calm herself. However, she has no strength to stand. She could do nothing but wait.

Her roommates came back with food her liked. It smelt good. She didn't want to eat. The sounds her roommates made annoyed her.

"Please be quiet," she said sadly.

"Dear, what's wrong with you?" her roommates asked worriedly.

She told the story to her roommates. They burst into laughter.

"Don't worry," they comforted her.

Her phone screen lit up. She guessed it was the reply. She had no courage to look at it. It was difficult for her to know the reply.

Drinking water might make her feel better. She made a cup of tea. Strangely, tea was bitter.

She begged her roommates to help her decipher the message. They didn't say a word after reading it.

She knew that he had rejected her. She thought that he

might like her. She was wrong and now embarrassed. She burst into tears.

"Why are you crying? He doesn't reject you. You can see the message by yourself," her roommates said.

She wiped her eyes and gazed at the screen. To her surprise, the reply was what she has wanted. He said that they can go out together this weekend.

She couldn't believe it. It was the best thing that has happened that week.

She began thinking about the appointment. It would be wonderful.



潘昱含

Pan Yuhang

Sunny

I came to this world when the hands of the clock just pointed to five forty in the afternoon, on February twelve, 1998. There are many interesting things about my family and myself I'd like to share with you.

I believe anyone of us must have a pet name since we were little babies. So do I. it's my mother who gave me a pet name, Qiqi, which has been using for many years since I was still an embryo. Why did Mother give me such a name? Qi in Chinese characters contains various meanings. Sometimes it means strange while sometimes it means wonders. Mother has had very high expectations of me and wanted me to become a miracle since I was a baby. As I grew older and could understand the implication behind the names, I really loved my amazing name given by Mother. Every time people called me, the name would never fail to remind me of

the aspiration that I was going to become a miracle.

It's not strange if one of my friends says to me, "You are so suitable for being a teacher, and you must live for becoming a teacher." However, it will be a little bit surprising that more than one friends say the same thing to me. Many of my friends once showed the similar ideas, more or less, that I'm so fit for becoming a teacher. I also tried to explain this interesting phenomenon. It does make sense that both of my parents are teachers and I grew up in the college, which possibly shaped my temperament in some ways.

My parents also pay much attention to improve my artistic ability. When I was seven-years-old, I was sent to the biggest Musical Drama Theatre in our city to learn how to play the violin. At that time, I was the first one in our county who could play the violin. Unfortunately, I quit it since I passed violin level-eight because of heavy homework. I didn't do quite well in violin, but one thing's for sure, it did benefit me a lot in many small ways.

My parents are teachers, and I'm also going to be a teacher several years later. I am doing my best to reach that goal. Man does not reveal himself in his history, he struggles up through it. I hope I can do that someday.

The Superwoman in My Life

I'm not looking for somebody with superhuman gifts, some superhero, some fairytale bliss." It's sung by Coldplay in Something Just Like This. I really like these lyrics, for they accurately demonstrate my feelings. I don't need to eagerly look for other superheroes, for there's already one by my side. She's my mother. My family members all jokingly call her superwoman.

My mother was the first undergraduate from her hometown, a small village with less than 200 people. My maternal grandmother told me more than once that almost all the villagers came to celebrate my mother. Under the influence of my mother, her younger sister, was also admitted to a college the following year. An excellent person not only shapes themselves but influences those surrounding them while shaping themselves. Mother is such kind of person.

Mother majored in history and got many awards, however, the school where she worked just after her marrying asked her to teach English, because of the lack of English teachers then. Mother then had to learn high school English course from almost nothing. It's easy to imagine how hard it would be for a married woman to have a good command of a new language. Fortunately, she managed. Mother believes that persistence leads to success. And I've been holding this sentence for my belief. When I was in my final high school year, I recalled this, and it worked.

Mother taught me practical English expressions. When I was in a bad mood, she inspired me using her unique experience. Parents are really their children's first teachers.

"I just want something I can turn to, some somebody I can kiss. I hope more superwomen will arise, and that every child will have their own superwoman.

A Good Idea

When I was seven years old, Mother often got up early and went to bed late.

One morning Mother was scanning the Internet for her work. I asked, "Mum, why are you so busy every day? Couldn't you just stop for a moment?"

Mother looked at me and said, "Darling, what's the matter? Is there something wrong?"

I stared at Mother's eyes carefully and said, "I saw a single grey hair. Why don't you stop and have a nap?"

Mother smiled and gestured for me to come back later. She held my hands and said, "Sweetheart, thank you so much. I'm so touched. I love you, baby. I'd love to rest, but this is my work. If I don't finish it on time, someone will punish me."

I understood it. Mother couldn't rest because she was afraid of being punished. It hit me that if there was no work, there wouldn't be fear, and it would be possible for Mother to rest.

I couldn't wait to tell Mother my brilliant idea, "Mum, I can sometimes meet your leaders. If I tell those uncles that you died, they will not send you more work."

I said this very excitedly and watched Mother as if to ask for praise. It's hard to say what Mother's facial expressions exactly contained. Mother's bright black eyes watered. I didn't know why. Mother hugged me tightly and said, "Thank you" and, "I love you" again and again.

For a long time, I have regarded the idea as a bad idea and tried to forget it. But now I consider it a great idea. The idea is a way to show my love. I must say there's nothing happier than this.

Love Story

It was a winter noon. Cloudy, cold. At the foot of an unknown mountain. She was walking along a path towards the mountain. She stopped and looked around the vacant path. She didn't feel strange. Nobody else was here. Such a season. Such a terrible day.

It was not until she finished climbing halfway up the mountain that she found a sign on the path: "No entry for three days".

She looked up and down several times and decided to go back and find a hotel, where she could stay for three days and then finish her climb.

As she walked down the mountain, it got colder and colder. She held herself to feel warmer. The weird cry of some unknown birds filled her with dread. She found herself walking faster and faster as if something horrible was pursuing her.

She noticed an inn at mid-mountain, hidden by trees. She hurried towards it.

As she got near, she found it was very strange. The faded door looked like something from ancient times. She went into the inn with hesitation and said "Hello! Anyone here?" to the empty air.

"How strange. Nobody here," she murmured.

"Welcome to our holiday inn," a hoarse voice suddenly sounded.

"Oh my God! You scared me!" she exclaimed, noticing a man sitting with half of his body hid behind the counter.

The inn had a weird atmosphere.

"What can I do for you?" the hoarse voice sounded again.

"I'd like to check in and stay here for at least two nights," she answered.

She went upstairs as soon as she got the keys to her room. She didn't want to stay with that odd man for a single minute longer than required.

After a hot bath, she felt better. She went towards the bed,

took the pills from her bag, and swallowed them with water. Then she took out a picture with two people in it. One was herself, the other was blurred, but still could be recognized as a young man. There's a sentence written on the back of the photo: "You are my sunshine". How strange. She couldn't recollect anything about this photo and this man.

Leaning against the wall, she was wondering about her relationship with the young man when sudden knocking sounded on the door.

She looked at the clock. It was twelve p.m. sharp. She opened the door. Strange. Nobody was outside. As she closed the door, lightning brightened the night and thunder boomed. She was so scared she fainted.

The knocking again. She regained consciousness and opened the door again. Nobody.

Knocking. A third time.

This eerie sound reminded her of the strange, scary things she had encountered recently. She jumped onto her bed without taking off her shoes and forced herself to fall asleep.

Thunder and lightning. The knocking was now constant.

Dread.

Recalling many horror movies, she had watched, she couldn't control herself and shouted, "Don't come! Don't come!"

In the hospital.

Several nurses and doctors surrounded a young woman.

"Nightmare? Again?" asked one doctor.

"Yes, almost every day. It's the sixth time since her accident last week," answered one of the nurses.

"Up the dosage," sighed the doctor.

There was recent news. A young couple traveled happily on an unknown mountain. During their return, they rode a motorcycle along a slope. Maybe the gods envied their happiness. The brakes failed, which meant it was extremely dangerous to ride along the steep narrow slope.

To make thing worse, the husband saw a truck heading toward them. He decided and asked, "Honey, do you love me?"

"Sure!" she answered.

"Take off my helmet. I'm too hot," he said.

She did so, reassured by his calm tone.

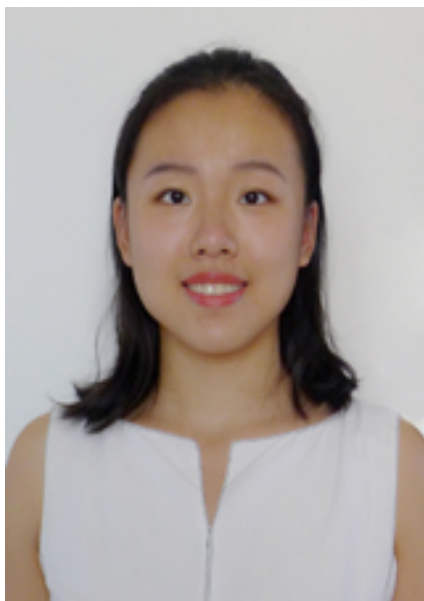
The local news program reported this terrible accident. One dead. One injured.

She survived, thanks to the helmet but had sleeping troubles. She often had awful nightmares. Every nightmare was the same. She saw a familiar mountain. The only difference was that she went to the mountain alone and forgot everything about her husband. She was crazy to do this because she could see her husband again.

Every time after the dream, she took out a picture in which she and her husband smiled happily together. On the back of the picture was a sentence: "You are my sunshine."

I heard this story from my friend. A story that can touch an author can also move readers. It touched me, so I chose to write it down. Love is really powerful. Treasure those you love.

I dedicate this article to those who believe in love.



葛以敏

Ge Yimin

Mindy

My name is Mindy. I'm in a typical family of three people from Huaibei City, Anhui Province. Relatively speaking, it's a small city in China. My parents work in the same hospital, but neither my father nor my mother is a doctor. My mother is a nurse and my father is a secretary. My hobbies are watching movies and working out. My current goals are improving my English and having a stronger body.

As for English study, I'm confident to say that my listening and spoken English are relatively good. I am a movie and TV junkie. I spend almost all of my free time watching American movies and TV shows, consequently, my listening and speaking are good. However, it has come to my attention that I might have "hit the wall" in English study. My favorite category for TV shows is sitcoms. I have watched a lot of famous sitcoms like *Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Modern Family*, *That 70s Show*, *Seinfeld*, and others.

It was easy for me to get a good grade in English in high school, but when I entered college and majored in English, things changed. I learned a lot from your class last semester and I hope to learn more this semester!

A Story About Homework

This is a story about how I was the most unlikely person to enter university in the eyes of my primary school math teacher.

When I was in primary school, Father had an unrealistic dream of homeschooling me. Father was medium-sized, tall, and handsome when he was young. He is now bald and wears a very big pair of glasses. Father has been near-sighted since he was a little boy. He blames it to study pressure, which is why he didn't want me to go to school at a very young age.

One day, Father said to my mother, "I have an excellent idea for our little girl! What do you say if we teach her at home? She'll gain even more knowledge, and have less pressure!"

Mother thought this was a joke at first and said, "Are you kidding? Stop dreaming! I haven't heard anyone doing this before!"

Father continued, "Listen! There are a lot of advantages..."

Mother said angrily, "Stop! I don't care how many advantages homeschooling has. I won't allow our daughter to become a weird kid with no friends!"

"Hear me out, please!"

Mother answered by slamming the door furiously. Mother loves me with all her heart, but she has a very hot temper.

This was a big conflict between my parents. Father later kept quiet about this idea, but he never really let it go.

Father thought that even though he couldn't homeschool me, he could take some burden off my shoulders by doing my homework for me.

Father did my homework for almost half a year before he was caught. I had the happiest time and thought Dad was the best father in the world.

One evening when Father was doing math exercises, he asked me, "How many pages have you been assigned to finish?"

"To page twelve," I said.

"Don't worry. I'll finish in half an hour," he assured.

I handed in my homework the next day. To my surprise, my math teacher asked me to come to her office after class.

"What did I do this time?" I asked myself and entered the teacher's office. I was very upset.

There it was. My homework was lying on her desk, open.

"Look at it. I only told you to finish to page twelve, but you finished on page fifteen. We haven't learned that chapter in class. I suspect that you copied the answers, and cheated on your homework. Why?"

I didn't utter a word because I hadn't done my homework.

"Tell your parents to come to school tomorrow, and I'll ask them myself!"

This was such a relief because I didn't have to answer such a tricky question. Father would answer instead.

He went to the teacher's office as requested.

"Excuse me, Mr. Ge. Are you aware that your daughter cheated on her homework?"

"Yes. I helped her," Father replied honestly.

My math teacher said in a shocked voice, "Oh! Why? You didn't do your kid any good!"

"I helped lessen her burden. To be frank, you assign way too much homework for a primary school student."

The conversation did not continue. My teacher didn't pick on me again. She had "let me go." And Father became one of her examples of bad parenting.

My College Life

If you ask me what's my biggest event recently, I would reply "entering college". I know it must sound like ancient history to many people since I was admitted to a college half a year ago, but I still recall the day when I first entered the university. It was like yesterday. I'm sure a lot of students have a hard time adjusting to the new environment. It even takes years for some people to finally fit in. That's why a lot of students will graduate before they realize the essence of college. I have to admit that is true in my case. Even after six months in college I still have a lot of new things to learn and to adapt to. But now I'm going to share a thing or two I learned about education, recreation, and change from last semester.

First, college is about education and you are expected to get good grades and a diploma. "College is a four-year vacation" is just another fairytale that your parents told to motivate you. We need to know that our priority right now is to learn. But a college education is not as boring and dull as you might think. College is educational in various ways. Both professional skills and life lessons are taught in college.

"All work and no play make Jack a dull boy." Recreation is also essential in college and you shall have free time to have fun. When you finally leave the boring and intense high school life, it's up to you to decide how you want to live. I believe that "work hard, play hard" is key to good study.

Finally, we are given permission to do a lot of things we couldn't do in high school. It is a good time for us to change. Put on some makeup because presentation matters. Join a gym. Keep fit and energetic so that you can study better.

Last semester, I kept those three things in mind and tried my best to live an ideal college life. As a freshman, I still have three years ahead of me and I will continue to study, have fun, and keep an open mind to change!

A Moment

I never seemed ordinary to others. I once tried to persuade a boy in my class to eat living beetles with me.

Believe it or not, as disgusting as it may sound, this is actually a romantic story.

A couple of years ago, I had several unusual pets such as snakes and beetles. No, as for the beetles, they were actually my mother's pets, not mine.

Mother works at a hospital. One day, her colleague gave her some beetles, explaining that they were Kowloon worms and a traditional medicine.

There were dozens of beetles. Mother fed them with expensive herbs. The beetles began multiplying. There were soon hundreds. I felt a sense of accomplishment when I saw the beetles become more and more numerous.

Meanwhile, I had a crush on a tall, handsome boy in my class. Naïvely, I thought if I behaved differently from other girls, he might find me attractive. I brought some beetles to class one day to get his attention.

During the break, I opened the box with the beetles to show him. The scent of herbal medicine filled the air. I picked up a beetle to impress him. It crept up my fingers. The boy tried to prevent the beetles from creeping up my arm. Was the ensuing tickle from the beetle or from the boy's touch?

The boy finally ate a beetle though he first thought it was disgusting. Among all my classmates, he was the only one willing to try. It had a light, spicy taste.

A favorite moment I still frequently recall, a small victory.



田立婷

Tian Liting

Trista

My name is Tian Liting. After watching the movie *Legends of the Fall*, I like the main character Tristan very much so I use Trista as my English name in order to remind me that I should follow my heart and chase my dreams no matter how hard it is.

I come from Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu. My hometown is famous for Lanzhou noodles, the magazine *Duzhe*, and the Yellow River which passes through the city and brings many good views to us.

My Childhood

I come from Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu. My hometown is famous for Lanzhou noodles, the magazine named *Duzhe* and the Yellow River which passes through the city and brings many good views to us. Lanzhou is a city surrounded by the Gaolan Mountain (Gaolan means the mountain near the river in the Xiongnu) and Baita Mountain (Baita means 'white tower'). Because of its terrain, Lanzhou is also called Jin City, which means it can protect its people very well. But now the polluted air in Lanzhou is very difficult to be fresh and the land is quite scarce. Regardless, Lanzhou is a beautiful and unique city, which has different nationalities such as the Hui nationality, the Yugu nationality, and the Dongxiang nationality. And, I love it very much and want to return to it after my college graduation.

I spent most of my childhood in the countryside with my grandparents. They were busy farming so I needed to find something to enjoy myself. I was quiet and did not like to go outside to play with other kids. I fell in love with watching TV and reading. I like reading Wuxia novels written by Gu Long, a popular writer in Hong Kong. My favorite TV show is *My Own Swordsman*. When I became older, watching movies was my biggest hobby. I like watching story movies because I think in this way I can see many cultures and different stories.

Mrs. Ma

There are so many important people in my life who love me very much and are willing to help and support me. Without them, I would lose myself and have more problems in my life. Mrs. Ma is one of them.

Mrs. Ma was my Chinese teacher in junior high school. She is tall, thin and very beautiful. But what impressed me most is that she always keeps an open mind to everything and is very responsible in her job and to her students.

I was her assistant. Every time she asked us to do something, I needed to write it down and repeated it after class. I would collect our homework and give it to her. When I entered her office, she often asked how was my day and talked with me about our study and other things. If some students made mistakes in their homework, she would give me a list of students and ask me to tell them that they had better come to her office and she would correct their mistakes in front of them.

In general, most teachers in China regard marks as the most important thing and they always ignore what their students think and feel as long as they can do a good job in exams. And they like to punish their student because of their mistakes. However, I remember that Mrs. Ma once said the only way to learn something is to make mistakes.

When we prepared for the final exam, we were given many exams and all of us made some mistakes but she did not punish us as other teachers did. She decided to let us hold many different competitions which had a certain topic every time. All of them were fairy tales but we needed to adapt them to other forms. For example, one of the topics is Frere Jacques. As the host of this activity, I searched and introduced this song and its various adaptations to my classmates.

My classmates were divided into several groups and each group had a different presentation based on this song and its

background story. We had a lot of fun in
that class and this kind of activity relaxed us in such a tense
situation and developed our interests in Chinese study.

The more I knew her, the more I admired her. I learned a lot
of things from her over the past three years. And I think I am going
to be a teacher just like her in the future.

Tasty Mutton

It was dark, empty, and cold. An out-of-breath girl rushed into the street. Tears rolled down her little red face. "Good boy, where are you? Please come here," she cried.

Exhausted and sad, she sat by a restaurant. Her stomach was grumbling. Worse, the smell from the restaurant made her remember her lunch. She wanted to eat mutton, crispy on the outside and tender on the inside. She felt her empty, complaining stomach. It reminded her that she had left home more than nine hours earlier without eating or drinking anything. She couldn't stop thinking about food and hot milk.

"Where could he have gone? I have searched for him for hours but still have no clue. I want to stop, but they will blame me. I must continue to search."

To distract herself from the thought and smell of food, she looked around and saw some cats. "They may be talking about me. There is no reason for a little girl like me being here at this time. It's late and cold. If I stay here, I may get a fever. I love him but I want to go home. Why did I leave him to play with those other kids? I told him to stay there. It's all my fault!" she thought.

Recalling the good times they had spent together, she felt guiltier and sorrier.

"Are you there, my darling?"

"Mom?"

"Thank God ! I found you! What are you doing here? It's almost eleven o'clock. Why didn't you come home? Don't you know we are worried about you?"

"Sorry, Mom. I lost our dog. I was afraid to go home so I kept searching for him," the little girl cried.

"What are you talking about? He's at home waiting for you."

Full of joyful surprise, she hugged her mom and stopped sobbing. They went home.

The little girl said, "Mom I want to eat mutton."



王孟婷

Wang Mengting

Monica

I am Monica from Qinghai Province and my Chinese name is Wang Mengting. I was born in Xining, the capital city of Qinghai and grew up there. Despite thirty or so ethnic minorities in Qinghai, I belong to the Han people. I love traveling though I have not been to many places. My favorite hobby is reading. When I find an interesting book, I can sit and read it for several hours. When it comes to my family, I felt proud and honorable. My grandfather and my father are both ordinary workers. They made great contributions to Chinese highways and I am deeply touched by their dedication. I am determined to be a person who can endure hardships and capable of hard work.

Unrequited Love

When I was a child, I lived in Xining City with my parents. My grandparents lived in a small village far from our city. My Grandmother was an ordinary tailor. She was illiterate because her father forbade her to be educated. She had to sustain the family at the age of thirteen after the death of her father. She looked after six siblings and did manual work at the same time. This great woman plays an important role in my childhood.

Though I lived in the city, I visited my Grandmother's home on weekends. Her hair was grey and her face was wrinkled. She was in her early seventies and wore glasses. She was diligent and generous, she liked cultivating fruits and vegetables and gave some of her vegetables to homeless people.

I asked, "Grandma, why do you give your vegetables to them?"

She smiled, "Because a person saved my life in the same way."

There were tears in her eyes.

Her hands were rough and calloused. I felt uncomfortable when she held my hands. In the morning, she stroked my head with her rough palms and said, "My little girl, it is time for breakfast. Wake up, honey."

I did not like the feeling of her calloused palms and said angrily, "Grandma, please don't touch my head with your rough hands! It really irritates me! I don't like it!"

Disappointed, she said, "I won't do it again. I made some delicious food for you. You will like it."

I thought that Grandmother's house was a splendid palace with oodles of meat because I had meat at every meal. When I put a piece of meat on her plate, she said, "Grandma is tired of eating that stuff. I want you to eat."

At night, she knitted a sweater for me. I said, "Granny, you

can do that tomorrow. It is time to sleep!"

She replied, "I won't have time tomorrow. I will complete it tonight so you can wear this beautiful sweater as soon as possible."

It took me years to understand Grandma. Her hands were rough because she did many things for me and my family. She gave me meat because we didn't have much meat to eat. She stayed up late to knit a sweater because I would go back home the next day. Her love was unrequited. I had a wonderful childhood because of her!

An Ordinary Girl in Southwest China

My Birth

One of Father's friends introduced Mother to him in 1991. They fell in love with each other at first sight and married in 1998. I was born in the second year after their marriage. Father was twenty-six and Mother was twenty-nine when I was born. They thought I was the best present from God. I think I am an ordinary people and I lead a common life as do most ordinary people. But in a way, I am special.

My grandmother was a Catholic. She said she could see ghosts when she was young. After being a Catholic, she didn't see ghostly stuff anymore. When I was one year old, she brought me to church and I had a baptism. My priest gave me the baptismal name called Teresa. Since then, I became a Catholic.

She told me, "You are lucky. Jesus loves you. "

I said, "But I do not believe it. God doesn't exist in our world."

She angrily and scolded, "Don't say stupid words! You are selected to be a Catholic. It is your honor! "

I still do not believe in Jesus. I think it was her imagination. Neither God nor ghosts exist in the world. Many basic concepts and principles appeared in the Bible and Catholicism. History, philosophy, science, biography and some positive views inspire people to lead a better life.

Before I went to primary school, I lived with my parents in a small bungalow. My father was a worker and my mother didn't have a job. We didn't have enough money to live in a building. But we had a wonderful yard with colorful flowers. I had great fun with my friends.

Our neighbor, Aunt Liu, was a middle-aged widow. Her husband died in an accident and left a 3-year-old son. She had a yard and planted vegetables. One day, my friend Luo Yi suggested

we steal two potatoes. And then, bake and eat them.

I refused, "No! My parents will beat me if I steal potatoes."

Luo Yi said, "It doesn't matter. She won't know. We will just steal two."

Compromised, I agreed with her.

After dinner time, Aunt Liu often took her son to the square and didn't lock the door. At first, Luo Yi entered her yard to make sure that she was not at home. Then I entered. My job was to dig out the potatoes as soon as possible. At last, we would rush out of her house and enjoyed the potatoes.

To my surprise, I met Aunt Liu outside her door with two dirty potatoes. I thought she would tell my parents. But she didn't. I apologized to her and she gave me another two potatoes.

She said, "I will tell your parents if you steal again. You can ask me for potatoes if you want. "

Since then, I have never stolen things.

Primary School

Mother got a job and my father had a promotion when I was seven. We moved to a six-story building. The new house was mid-sized. It was a nice place to live. I entered a primary school near our house. On my first day at school, most of my classmates were crying. I was curious about everything so I didn't cry. The young teacher had no idea what to do. She couldn't control the class and she was crying too. I knew she cried for different reasons.

In the third year of primary school, we had a new math teacher called Mrs. Zhang, who was the strictest teacher I have ever met. But I didn't like her because she treated me badly.

On Teachers' Day, my classmates gave gifts to her, including clothes, brooches, and pens. I made a card and drew beautiful birds on it. I thought she would be happy to see it.

But to my surprise, she asked me, "Where is your gift? "

I said, "The card! Teacher, I made a card for you. "

She seemed unhappy and said, "Stupid! "

Since then, she treated me badly and I hated her.

I did fairly well in primary school. I loved reading and I often got one hundred marks on exams. My parents praised me and

bought me a Barbie doll as a reward. I put the toy on my bookshelf as a symbol of honor.

Middle School & Senior High School

I entered middle school at the age of twelve. I did well as usual. But I made a big mistake on the senior high school entrance exam. So, I didn't enter the best senior high school in the city.

Fortunately, the teachers at my high school were reasonably good. I loved my English teacher. She taught us English for three years and made a great contribution to our English study. She was about thirty years old, was pretty and had long curly hair. She was an excellent teacher with sufficient experience and enough knowledge.

She was experienced in teaching. The skills she taught to us were useful and practical. In explaining the difference between COMPLETE and FINISH. she said, "When you marry the right woman, you are COMPLETE, when you marry the wrong woman, you are FINISHED. And when the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are COMPLETELY FINISHED." She had the ability to turn English into an interesting class which emboldened us to learn English.

One of my classmates had a diagnosis of leukemia. His poor family couldn't afford the endless medical expenses. My English teacher raised money for him and went to the hospital every week. The boy was moved and determined to be a teacher like her. Unfortunately, the boy has not recovered and he didn't participate in the Gaokao. His strong mind touched me. Being a good teacher not only was my dream but also it was his dream.

I am ordinary because I lead a common life like most Chinese students. People in my life are special. They have their own understandings of life and affect my life a lot.

Terrible Panic

Sweat dripped down my neck. My sweat-streaked hands began shaking. I tried to hold the pen without trembling. I failed. It slipped from my hand. I picked it up anxiously. I didn't know what to write.

Only fifteen minutes left.

My throat burned. I wanted to swig a big glass of water or ice tea. I didn't have time to think about it. A hiccup came out of my mouth unwittingly with a pungent odor. My whole world reeked of leek.

Terrible.

It was quiet. I could only hear a clock ticking. Suddenly, a gust of wind wafted my paper off the desk. I bent to pick up the paper which was now stuck to the ground. I tried several times and failed. People looked at me as if I were a stupid zoo monkey. Embarrassed, my head was covered with sweat. My hands quivered.

I felt unable to stand steadily. I was losing my mind. This terrible moment reminded me of an experience on a roller coaster. I didn't remember how I got in the seat and ended my terrible panic.

The bell rang.

I couldn't remember what the teacher said. I knew that I had written nothing in fifteen terrible minutes and handed in a paper with few words. My mind was blank when I left the classroom.

I wiped sweat with my sleeve and took a deep breath. My fifteen-minute panic subsided. After leaving the school, I bought a large bottle of mineral water and swigged it.

My high school life ended in a fifteen-minute panic. I wailed all night and suffered several tough days after the exam. My aged grandfather lay on a hospital bed in pain. I tried to wake him up but failed. It had happened two hours before the exam.

Grandfather died and I failed an important exam on the same day. I couldn't recover for a long time. Gradually, I realized death is inevitable but failure is not.



杨柳新

Yang Liuxin

Melody

Eighteen years ago, I was born in a small village in Henan province. It was not good news for my family. When my older sister was born, my parents' plan to move to Beijing went up in smoke. When they planned to move to Beijing again, I was born. It was difficult for them to move to Beijing because they had to take care of me and my sister.

When I was five, my sister was eleven. When I was in kindergarten, my sister was in Grade Six. In order to save time, Father sent us to school together. To my despair, my sister's teacher asked her students to be at school before six-thirty, because they would have a graduation exam and must prepare well. It was very early for me. I stood at the door of my classroom alone, for even the teacher had not come. Thinking in another way, it was a good thing,

because I was often the first one to reach the classroom and, therefore, my teachers all thought that I was a "good student".

I get along well with my family. When my parents are cooking, I and my sister are willing to help them. I enjoy playing mahjong with my family. Father is usually the loser.

Now, I'd like to share my life during the Spring Festival. My parents must work at school, so I stayed at home with my bigger sister. When I got up, I told her, "Cook for me immediately." If she refused, I would call my parents and say that she was bullying me. My sister and I sometimes fight with each other with our hands and legs. The result was that she cried and went back to her room or I cried and went to my room, but we soon made up. That is why we get along well.

Now I am eighteen. I am not beautiful. I have big eyes, a small mouth, and short hair. I used to have long hair, but I wanted to try having short hair. I love singing, which is the reason for my English name, Melody. I often sing using the phone app Wesing. Another hobby is public speaking. When it comes to my character, I am outgoing with my best friends but shy with strangers. One of my shortcomings is timidity. I don't have the courage to make a speech or sing in public. I know I will be a teacher soon, so I must force myself to speak bravely to improve myself. What I think is the most serious problem is that I lack courage. When I meet some difficulties, the first thing I do is cry. Though it is difficult for me to correct this bad habit, I will try my best to make myself stronger.

A Bowl of Beef Noodles

I do not like doing homework. My classmates can go out and play. Their parents give them freedom. I hate you! Why must I stay at home?" Yang Xiaoxin says angrily.

"Why are you so naughty? Why do you not listen to us?" Her parents scold her.

"I don't like doing homework!" she cries.

"What do you love? You must finish your homework!" her father, Yang Zhang says.

Yang Xiaoxin becomes angrier. She throws her homework on the floor and slams the door.

Yang Xiaoxin, a junior student, is optimistic and outgoing. She likes singing and drawing. Her parents often ask her to do extra homework. She doesn't have time to do what she likes. She is very upset. So, when her parents force her to do homework again, she quarrels with them and runs away.

It is night. Xiaoxin feels cold. She is also hungry.

"Where can I go? Who will understand me?" she thinks. Xiaoxin feels lonely and sad.

Xiaoxin sits down on the street. She watches people come and go. There is a beef noodle shop near her. She wants to eat noodles, but she has no money.

Luckily, the owner of the beef noodle shop sees Xiaoxin. He invites Xiaoxin to his shop. Xiaoxin is happy. She thinks it is the best meal.

Xiaoxin tells the shopkeeper her troubles.

"Thank you for your hospitality. I leave my home. My parents do not understand me. They make me do things. I do not like them." Xiaoxin says.

"But you know, your parents love you." the owner of the beef noodle shop answers.

"If they love me, they should let me do what I like!" Xiaoxin says angrily.

"I just buy you a bowl of beef noodles. Your parents give you food and clothes all the time. They want you to study. They hope you will have more opportunities in the future. They don't want you to be as tired as they are. If there are any misunderstandings, talk to your parents, OK?" the boss advises.

Xiaoxin understands something. She thanks him and goes home.

She gets home. She hugs her mother. "Mom, I love you"

"Dear, I love you, too."

Admiration

Who is your admirable person? Most people may say some great people who promoted the development of the world. However, when it comes to my most admirable people, my dad must be one of the important people. Though he is ordinary and does not do anything earth-shattering, he is my wonderful hero.

Father is forty-nine years old. He is tall and thin, but he is the powerful backbone of our family. When he smiles, wrinkles spread out from the corners of his eyes. I think he is handsome. His big, strong hands give me a sense of security.

He is very responsible. He got up at half-past six and made breakfast for me when I was in senior high school. He tries his best to support our family, wanting us to live a better life. As a teacher, he is never late and is patient with his students. Once it was time to go to bed, he suddenly realized that he had not finished his work, so he went to the office building to correct students' homework immediately. He came back after one AM.

He is humorous and makes me happy. It is easy for him to make me happy. When I am in trouble, he cheers me up by telling jokes, making faces, and so on. With his encouragement, I have the courage to pursue my dream. When I was in senior high school, most people around me said that it was better if I studied science, but I love studying liberal arts. When I was struggling to choose, Father told me to follow my heart and that he would support my decision. So, I studied my favorite subjects. Without Father's support, I would not have had the courage to pursue my dream.

He is strong and brave. When he meets difficulties, he bears it in silence. When I was thirteen, he was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism. The first thing he did was to comfort ME! He went to work as usual and lived optimistically, though he was miserable. He never mentioned his discomfort. Fortunately, he recovered completely.

Finally, my father is the best in the world. He is responsible,

courage, optimistic, and humorous. I am lucky to have such a kind father. How about your admiration?

Growth

When I was thirteen, Mother was forty-four. She had long straight black hair and big eyes. Mom is not tall. She was strict with me and I was a little afraid of her. She often forced me to do my homework after school and did not allow me to watch TV from Mondays to Fridays. When I did something wrong, she even hit me with a stick. But, at times, she was also very kind to me. She quit her job and stayed at home to take care of me, hoping that I would grow up happily.

Once when I went home after school, I found Mom lying in bed with gauze on her legs. I was surprised and nervous. "What's wrong?" I asked anxiously.

"I'm fine," Mother smiled.

"What on earth happened? Please tell me!" I said.

"I just broke my legs. Nothing serious," she replied.

"Just?" I asked doubtfully.

"I went to the market with your aunt. A truck hit me," Mom reported.

"And then?" I anxiously asked, eager to know what had happened next.

"Your aunt and I were stuck and lay on the ground. My left leg was broken. That's why I'm lying here. Your aunt was not hurt. She is now resting at home," Mom said.

"Is it serious?" I asked.

"It's okay. Rest well, and I will recover soon. Don't worry," Mom said gently.

I didn't say a word. I just walked out of the bedroom and into the kitchen. I lowered my head to eat, as tears flowed silently down my face.

After eating, I washed the dishes and accidentally broke a plate. Mom heard the noise and asked what happened.

"I am so sorry, Mom. I broke a plate," I answered guiltily.

"Are you hurt?" Mom asked worriedly.

"I am okay," I replied.

I cleaned the floor and threw the garbage into the trash container.

I went to school the next day, but I couldn't concentrate on my studies. I was worried about Mom. When the teacher noticed, he asked me to step outside the classroom, where I explained my preoccupation.

"I'm sorry to hear that, but don't worry about what has happened. Instead, work for the present. What you can do now is to study hard. Don't let your mother worry about you," he patiently advised.

I was convinced, calmed down, and tried my best to study. Mother felt comforted and soon recovered.

Growth is painful. We must go through some tribulations and lose something precious. We should accept what we can't change. This was the first time I understood the meaning of growth.

Hell To Heaven

She was eighteen. She gazed at the computer screen, surprised and excited. She had never had such a feeling before. Disbelieving her eyes, she stared, confirming the number over and over. It was like a dream. Her uneasy heart pounded up and down. Keeping the corners of her mouth turned up, she began singing. She wanted to dance, but unfortunately, she couldn't.

She rejoiced at the thought of being rid of her past life. She was tired of doing the same thing repeatedly. Running against time and accompanying the moon, she had been desperate. She had been a machine, doing examination papers over and over again, not thinking, and with little happiness. She wondered why she had been consumed by such boring tasks. Her three daily destinations were the big classroom, a crowded restaurant, and her dormitory room. She was entirely fed up with it.

Hell to Heaven: She visualized walking along a beautiful beach, carrying a pail of sand. A cool breeze encouraged gentle smiles. She faced the sea and danced cheerfully. She hummed as she picked shells from the beach.

Sometimes she ran, letting the sea wind touch her face.

Sometimes she sat quietly, enjoying the wonderful scenery.

Sometimes she played interesting games alone.

Sometimes she wondered by the sea, listening to the sound of the sea.

She was back.

She realized that she should share. She picked up her phone and punched in her parents' number.

"Congratulations," came their flat reply, she could feel their repressed delight.

Ending the call, she began to sort out the past. She gazed at her disgusting bookcase in a hopeless and upset way. She wanted to throw away this nasty reminder immediately, but she didn't.

Good news! It was over! Something unknown, like a

mountain, had pressed against her constantly. She was out of breath. Now, she could discard all that without worry. She hesitated. Reading the books with a multitude of words, she felt proud. She could not help but recall her old boring, busy life. But, it had been meaningful.

Cherish memories.

She hated the terrible reminder, but could not throw it away. "It made me miserable, but it does have many precious memories." Finally, she did not discard it. She found a place for it to be treasured.

She sat quietly on a sofa, examining her past. She did not believe that she had smiled. It was not as bad as she thought. There had been kind teachers, interesting classmates, a pure campus, a young self, and, countless test papers that she wanted to hate but couldn't.

Scored 587. Admitted.



杨羽彤

Yang Yutong

Ciel

My Chinese name is Yang Yutong and my English name is Ciel. My home is Baotou, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. I'm an ethnic Han. I live with my father and my mother. I am an only child.

As for my future, since I entered a normal university and chose English as my major, I will become an English teacher at a local high school or middle school. But I often think that my future could have infinite possibilities. I want to travel around the world, appreciating the splendid scenery and meet all kinds of interesting individuals. I will spare no effort to achieve my dream.

An Unforgettable Day

I went to kindergarten at the age of 4. I asked Mother, "Why should I go to kindergarten? I want to stay home with you."

Mother smiled and replied, "Oh, my lovely little girl, it is time for you to learn something. I'm sure you'll enjoy playing with other children."

"No! I won't like it!" I screamed.

Mother smiled and said nothing.

At kindergarten, I met thirty-year-old Mrs. Wang. She wore beautiful clothes and had a lovely smile.

When she first saw me, she said, "Can I call you 'Tongtong'? I'm sure we will have a good time."

I liked Mrs. Wang a lot and began to enjoy kindergarten.

Children's Day was approaching. Mrs. Wang said, "We will have a talent show on Children's Day. I hope that everyone can take an active part. You can sing, dance, or tell stories. The best performance will be rewarded."

This was very appealing, but I couldn't sing or dance well. I told Mother, who said: "Why don't you tell a story? I think you are a good storyteller."

I was happy to hear that and decided to tell a story at the talent show. I chose *The Ugly Duckling*. I practiced very hard at home and memorized all the story's details.

On Children's Day, I told *The Ugly Duckling* before all my classmates. I did a really good job. I told the story fluently without hesitation or repetition. I used different tones for each character in the story. When I finished, Mrs. Wang applauded. I was excited when she announced that I had won the best performance.

My mother was also very happy and said, "I am really proud of you, my dear daughter!"

That's an unforgettable day in my childhood.

My Junior Middle School

At the age of seven, I went to junior middle school. At first, I couldn't get used to it. We had to learn three subjects, including Chinese, Math, and English. We had to sit in the classroom for nearly six hours a day. At that time, it was too much for me. I missed my kindergarten a lot.

To my mother's surprise, I did quite well in Math. Math teacher asked me to be Math course representative. I was very proud of that.

One day, Teacher asked me to collect our homework. However, my best friend Wang Jiajia forgot to do her homework at home. She said, "You are my best friend. Please don't tell the teacher I don't hand in my homework."

I hesitated for a while and said, "Ok. I think Teacher won't find out."

However, Teacher count our homework and found one copy was missing. She called me to her office, asked: "A student didn't turn in his or her homework. Do you know that?"

I said, "It is Wang Jiajia."

"Why don't you tell me at first?" Teacher said.

I was afraid Teacher would get angry. But I told the truth, "Wang Jiajia is my best friend. She is afraid to be blamed by you. So, she begs me not to tell you. I'm sorry, teacher."

The teacher said, "I understand your feeling. But it is not a good behavior. You won't help her this way. You have to obey the rules."

I stood silently with my head down.

The teacher added, "That's all right. I am not angry with you. Be sure not to do it again."

"Of course," I replied.

It is an important day in my junior school. I know that I can't do whatever I like. I have to obey the rules.

A Moment

It is a chilly winter day. Heavy snow falls. The wind is cold and strong. It seems a sharp knife is cutting your face.

Two PM. The sun glimmers from thick clouds, making the streets dim.

I rush to the bus stop. I am anxious. I am too hurried. I slip on an icy slope. I fall. Pain shoots through my knees. Tears obscure my vision.

"It is no time for crying or you will be late for the appointment." I scold myself. You don't want to be late, do you?

I struggle and stand. I look up at the empty grey sky. I feel lonely. Will I meet her this afternoon?

I catch the bus. As I approach my destination, a thousand thoughts surge. What does she look like now? What should I say? What if she forgets about our appointment? What if...

The bus stops. I get off. I take a deep breath. Cold air hurts my nose. Now I feel calm.

Starbucks is just over there, on the corner of the avenue. The aroma of coffee is so appealing.

I go to Starbucks and stop at the door. I look around. Nobody.

"Well, you see," I whisper, "She forgot you. Maybe she doesn't think you are still friends."

Pain fills my heart.

I hear a knock. I turn back and search for the source of the sound.

It is her! My dear friend sits near a glass window. She knocks on the window to draw my attention.

We watch each other through the glass. She smiles. I smile.

We lost contact for nearly two years. One phone call. Now we meet each other. We are still good friends. We both know that.

I push the door open and enter the coffee shop.



冯子夏

Feng Zixia

Rebecca

My grandfather gave me the name Feng Zixia because "xia" means summer in Chinese, and I was born in summer. In addition, when I was born, it was eleven PM to one AM, which is zi in the twelve-hour time system, an ancient timing method in China. My English name is Rebecca, I named myself. It is from one of my favorite novels whose heroine's name is Rebecca.

I come from Henan Province, with the third largest population in China. My hometown, Xinxiang, is so small that I bet you never heard of it. However, people who live there are diligent and generous, including my family, which is made up of my father, mother, grandmother and me. My father is a salesman and is often away on business trips. My mother, a head nurse who works in the biggest hospital in our city, is also too busy to make time to take after me. That's why my grandmother lives with us.

My Cousin

Like most of my peers, I'm an only child. This is because of the family planning policy. I do have an elder cousin who is my uncle's child. And that is why she was my playmate at home when I was a child. However, she gave me a bad impression from time to time.

"You started painting lessons with your cousin," said Mom, a little angrily. "Your cousin's painting improves, while you just skip the painting class from time to time." I was six years old.

"Your cousin just won an award at your dancing school," said Mom, trying her best to swallow her anger. "Meanwhile, your dance teacher called me and complained about your bad behavior last week." I was ten years old.

"How can you watch television for such a long time and feel at ease? Don't you know that your final exam is coming?" shouted Mom, who was out of control. "LOOK AT YOUR COUSIN! She is just four months older than you. How many times did you see her watching television? Is it impossible for you to finish your homework as soon as she?" I was 12.

Now you can understand why I was fed up with my cousin. I was jealous. Compared to her, I thought I was nobody.

However, she was never hostile to me because of my envy. She treated me like her own sister, sharing anything she had with me, although I often troubled her on purpose.

"Here's a hamburger from McDonald's. I remember you like it," said Cousin.

"Are you trapped by this math problem? Let me have a look," she said and taught me how to solve it.

Cousin is the most kind-hearted girl I ever met. It's my pleasure to have such a nice cousin. If I have a next life, I will be very glad to be her cousin once again.

Spring Festival

Something happened in my Spring Festival holiday which is not worth mention. However, it did impress me deeply so that I still remember it.

It was a Sunday and I was going to a cinema to watch *Detective Chinatown II* with my mom. Waiting for the movie opening, I ordered a bowl of noodles at a roadside restaurant then finished it quickly. Only a little soup was left. Then I stood up and left with my mom. We went a few steps when my mom stopped me and asked me to look back, in a low voice. She told me that a man in rags went straight to our former seat, sat and picked the bowl I had left, and gulped the remaining soup down.

"He walked around us, staring at your noodles while you were eating," my mother said. I ran to him, intending to buy him a bowl of noodles. However, he was leaving with something to eat in his hands. Mother guessed a whole family waiting for his return with some food.

I can still scarcely believe someone in this world lives this way - barely able to keep body and soul together. Impressed by this, I decided to save my money and donate it so that I can help others like this man.

A Priceless Moment

It was a hot August day, the kind of afternoon when kids looked for fun. An old man clads in rags waited to cross the road. He held a bag tightly. With eyes full of expectation. He seemed eager to do something.

I saw him three or four times a week. He often wore a padded cotton coat, although the outdoor temperature was already over thirty degrees. I wondered if he had any other clothing. Wrinkles covered his face. I couldn't guess his age. Thin hair stuck to his forehead, making him uncomfortable. He frowned. How many days had it been since he had showered? His body odor was unspeakably terrible - a combination of sweat, rubbish, and bad body odor. He coughed hard. It was harsh and ugly. I often looked at this man who picked up rubbish day after day. I felt more than a little disgust.

When I saw him that August afternoon, he was eagerly staring at the other side of the road. It seemed that he wanted to walk straight across the road although the traffic was heavy. I stared at him and thought, "How foolish!"

When in the middle of the road, he saw a bottle lying on the ground, went straight to it, picked it up, and put it into his bag, ignoring the heavy traffic.

After a difficult time, he reached the other side of the road and trudged to a group of college students. I supposed that he wanted the empty, discarded bottles.

To everyone's surprise, he didn't take the bottles offered to him. Instead, he went straight to a collection box surrounded by the students. A banner read, "Contributions for Project Hope"

He dug into one of his pockets, very slowly. He pulled out a coin of little value and dropped it into the collection box.

My eyes were wet.



柴澳

Chai Ao

May

I was born in 1999 when Macau reverted to China. To memorialize its return, Mom named me Ao, which also contains her best wishes for me. My English name is May. My birthday is in the fifth lunar month. My lucky number is five and my favorite season is spring. These reasons explain my English name.

I come from Heilongjiang Province. The summer there is cool, while winter days are extremely long and cold. I like the snow in winter, which is regarded as a breathtaking gift from nature.

I like reading books. I want to travel around the world. As a student, I can't achieve it now. But it is books that broaden my horizons and arouse my curiosity about the world. Enjoying reading helps me know how wonderful the world is.

Becoming a teacher has been my dream since I was a little girl. I like the atmosphere of schools and enjoy the friendship

between students and teachers. Being admitted into Shaanxi Normal University is the first step to realize my dream. Learning English well and improve myself are what I should do at university. Cool kids never die. I believe that I will be a good teacher and be responsible for my students in the future.

Success

Xiao Yu is seven years old. Her parents are farmers. They go to big cities for money. Xiao Yu is lucky. Her parents bring her to the city. Village life is happy. Kids play outside every day. Green flowers, singing birds... Many interesting things are there. Xiao Yu lives a happy life.

It's time to leave, Xiao Yu cries. She says, "Father, I don't want to go. Why do we have to?"

Her father stops her. "Dear, you are lucky. We are here for you. You need to study. You can understand one day."

Xiao Yu says nothing.

At the new school, Xiao Yu is unhappy. There is much homework every day. She has to get up early. She studies several hours after school. One day, the teacher says, "Spell the word for us."

Xiao Yu stands still. Other children do not play with her. These things make her sad. She doesn't want to make her parents unhappy. They work hard. They come home. They are tired. One day, they ask Xiao Yu, "How is school?"

She replies, "Good!" She wants to tell the truth. Before she goes to sleep, she cries. She tries her best. She wants her parents to be happy.

One day, Xiao Yu visits her aunt. Her aunt's daughter, Xiao Yuan, is older than Xiao Yu. She plays the piano. She sees Xiao Yu. She stops and says, "You are that girl from a village? Can you play the piano?"

Xiao Yu is angry. She says, "Yes, I can." She lies. She doesn't know how to play the piano. She doesn't like the way Xiao Yuan speaks.

At night, she has a dream. She goes back home. She runs in the field. She plays games with friends ... There are no rules or homework.

"Why do city children dislike me? Without farmers, what

would they eat?" She thinks. She studies hard. She spends more time reading.

Finally, she succeeds. Xiao Yu becomes confident. She learns to talk to others. She makes friends.

Learn from Xiao Yu. Try. We all can succeed.

Cousin And I

My cousin, Zhang Zhi, is one year older than me. The son of my aunt, we grew up together. He is one of my best friends.

However, when we were children, we quarreled. I was compared to him, which made me really unhappy.

He is tall and has big eyes. When we were both in kindergarten, the teacher praised, "What a handsome boy! He will be so handsome when he grows up. Chai Ao, you should work hard, and learn from your cousin!" He plays ball games well and his voice is louder than mine. I was criticized because I was shy. He is stronger than me. When we went out to play, I was left behind. He ran fast and I couldn't catch up.

Aunt is a teacher and is strict with Zhang Zhi. As the eldest boy of our extended family, he is spoiled by my grandparents who think boys are superior to girls. He is also good at flattery, which often makes Grandma happy. When she bought a new coat, he would say "Grandma, this coat suits you so well."

Grandma was very glad to hear that and would give him some change to buy snacks.

Every time we went to Grandma's home, she cooked Cousin's favorite food. At one time, I thought he was hypocritical and disliked him. I wondered why adults asked me to learn from him. Now thinking about it, he was mature and good at compliments, while I was stubborn.

One weekend night, he slept at my home. We played together. He grabbed my pencil and said, "My mother gave this to you. Now it belongs to me."

When I angrily reported this to Father, he said, "Share it with your cousin." I was so upset and shouted, "You love him so much, make him for your son! I will leave and never come back."

However, before I put on my shoes. Father stopped me. Several years later, I understood that even it was his mistake, Father couldn't punish him. He was a guest.

Cousin is intelligent and a good student. He started elementary school two years earlier than others. He was admitted by Chang'an University when he was eighteen. Now he is preparing

for the postgraduate examination. We are college students and don't argue anymore. I feel lucky to have a relative studying in the same city.

Sister

My sister, Chai Rui, is fourteen. She is six years younger than me. When I was busy with study, she was in junior middle school. It is now her turn to study hard for her future.

My sister is a beautiful girl with big eyes; long silky hair and fair skin. She is smarter than I am. When I went home this winter holiday, I could hardly recognize her because she had grown so much. She likes painting and at one time she wanted to be an artist. From northeast China, she is good at skating, and because of her courage, she does it very well.

We like to watch movies together. Her favorite star is Aamir Khan. She feels astonished that he is in his fifties. Though we are sisters, our characters are totally different. I am quiet but she is lively and brings our family much joy.

We quarreled when we were children. I once thought because of her coming that my parents forgot me. They often asked me to share TV and delicious food with Sister. I felt it was unjust and wanted to leave my family.

There was an unforgettable thing happening when Sister was six years old. She is a cute girl who likes delicious food. One day morning, when I prepared to have breakfast, I was astonished to find that she had finished eating the sandwich which Mom prepared for me. I was so angry and I shouted, "Who allows you to eat my food?" Though she felt guilty, my words hurt her. She replied, "Last time when I had a stomachache, it's you who ate my hamburger. I haven't complained about it." I contradicted, "You said that you couldn't eat it, so..." "But should you shout at me? You hurt my pride. You are not my sister anymore"

I was speechless. Finally, Mom came and said, "Girls, stop quarreling! If you behave well, I will consider cooking delicious food for you." Finally, we made up with each other.

Now thinking about such childish behavior, I want to apologize to my sister. We are sisters and good friends. She likes to chat with me on phone on weekends. It makes me happy to be needed.

Neighbors

The first week we moved to our new apartment, the neighbors were unfamiliar strangers. Though we two families were physically close, we never talked.

In 2007, my family stopped renting and bought our own apartment in a prosperous block near my school.

My parents spent half a year decorating and furnishing the apartment.

I was eager to move in. I was happier than a child who lived in a beautiful castle.

I was curious about our next-door neighbors. Were they friendly? Would they have a lovely girl I play with? Did the family have a little dog?

I failed to see anyone coming in and out of the door. My curiosity increased. I asked, "Mom, how strange! Why have I never met our neighbors?"

Mother smiled, "Wait. We will meet them someday.

One day, while Father was installing a chandelier, he couldn't find its remote control.

Our neighbors' child, a mischievous boy had taken it.

As he was about to leave, Father scolded, "Where are you going? That's not your toy!"

The boy's face turned red. He lowered his head and stammered, "I think it's useless. So..." he returned it and then fled.

Afterward, I met the boy several times. Each time he behaved awkwardly and ran away.

One afternoon, I forgot my key. I knocked on our apartment door.

No answer.

It was getting dark. Hungry and tired, I sat on the stair and felt bored. I heard footsteps louder and louder. "Someone is coming," I thought.

"Child, why are you here?" a middle-aged woman asked and

smiled.

I made no reply. Mother had told me not to talk to strangers.

Seeing my worry, the woman explained, "I am the aunt next door. I work outside. You must be my new neighbor. Have you met my son? I worry that he has disturbed your family."

The intangible silence between our two families was broken.

The boy and I became good friends.

Later, our neighbors moved. The warm-hearted aunt and the boy remain in my memory.



王诗琪

Wang Shiqi

Leslie

My name is Wang Shiqi. My English name is Leslie which is from my favorite singer and actor, Leslie Cheung. I was born on 4 December 1997. I am from Guilin, Guangxi, which is famous for its picturesque scenery. As a matter of fact, I have not spent a lot of time living in Guilin, because my father is from Guangdong and I grew up there. I went to Guilin to finish senior high school.

My favorite hobby is to travel. I have been to Guangzhou, Zhongshan, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Hong Kong, Suzhou, and Shanghai. Going to a new city to have some new experience impacts on my thinking. Exposure to different environments, cultures, and people broadens my mind and enriches my soul. I hope to have additional such opportunities to explore more interesting places.

I enjoy writing stories about my life. Everyone has their own unique life story. We can't judge whose story is more valuable. I enjoy translating the bits of everyday life into words. It's a ritual to commemorate every day we spend. It's a pleasure to put the people and things that I meet in my life story.

The Rest Is Still Alive

On August 4, a powerful typhoon hit the southeast coast. Shenzhen and Hong Kong wrapped themselves in strong winds. There were few people on the road, and the bad weather made the city look a little messy. Students were given a chance to sleep in at home. Busyness can take a breather.

The road was filled with water flooding the wheels. Pedestrians waded through the rain in slow motion. The cars drove by, raising a pool of sewage, splashing pedestrians who were shouting abuse with anger and embarrassment. An old tree was killed in the battle with the heavy wind and rain and lay in the middle of the road. The traffic police came with a crane, and the old trunk was dragged away as if it had not been there for decades.

I took the high-speed train early in the morning from Guilin to Shenzhen and then went to Hong Kong.

I got off the high-speed train and took a taxi heading to Luohu Port. Through the window, a wet city rushed by. The strangeness of that land came to me, making me trance. The driver reminded me that my phone was ringing.

"Have you reached Shenzhen? Have you put on enough clothes? Take your umbrella and don't get wet. I am cooking soup. You can eat it when you arrive."

The familiar accent and tone were reassuring. Old people in south China love soup. They use coals to boil the soup slowly, waiting for half a day, which makes it very tasty.

I have not enjoyed her soup for almost three years.

"Grandma! Have dinner first, don't wait for me. Ok?"

2

Grandma leads a hard life, but she never complains. That is the characteristic of the older generation. They don't utter a bitter word even when crushed by the heavy stones of life, let alone fuss over a slight illness. Every time I asked her about the past, she happily refloated those sunken days and nights to satisfy my curiosity. How

did she spend her youth before I was born?

In that era, children and adults were suffering from starvation and poverty. Life was very difficult. Grandma's mother gave birth to her and soon died. She talked about her mother who was a distant and vague memory for her jokingly. Instead of calling her mother "mother", she called her "aunt". The children called their parent's uncles and aunts. It was an old custom in their village.

"At that time, our stomach was always empty. My aunt was very ill. We had no money to take her to a doctor. So, my grandma climbed the hills to look for some medicinal herbs, and then took them and a cup which had a gold side and a silver side, to "Seven Sister", who was a Bodhisattva of our village. Grandma devoutly burnt joss sticks, put one fen RMB at the bottom of a censer, and then threw the "cup". The gold side came up. It meant that the medicine was useful. She happily went back home and had my aunt take the medicine. Luckily it worked and my aunt got better. Grandma was pleased to kill the only chicken as a gift for "Seven Sister", though she had planned to use to kill the chicken to celebrate Spring Festival. However, something unexpected happened. Aunt got out of bed, ate the chicken in the pan except for the chicken's head, and then died. Grandma said she was in a hurry to meet the Death.

She spoke slowly and I listened to her with great interest. At that time, I was 13 and she was 76.

"The villagers said that I had killed my aunt. My grandma did not want me to be gossiped about and was often angry and reproachful. No one mentioned it afterward. I could not walk when my aunt was dead. Grandma carried me to the farmland every day, put me in a small basin, and began to work. No one taught me to speak or walk. As time went by, the basin was too small for me to sit in. I began to crawl on the ground. My right leg is longer than the left and I was far shorter than the other children because of the long time I had spent sitting in the basin."

She took my hand to touch her knee where there was a tumor. I had not noticed it before. It has been there before she could walk. When I was a child, it was she who held my shoulder and

helped me take my first step.

"Later, my uncle (he was actually her father) took your granduncle to Hong Kong. Grandma did not allow him to take me, because I was old enough to help her do the housework. Finally, I was forced to stay in the village living with Grandma. My uncle and brother left for Hong Kong."

My granduncle later worked as a carpenter in Hong Kong. He gradually had some savings, gained a foothold, and formed a family. Now he is eighty-seven, living with his children and grandchildren healthily and happily. However, my grandmother led a hard life, which was quite different from his.

"Not long after I married your grandpa, he went to Hong Kong. He was there for twelve years and never returned even once. I gave birth to your father when I was thirty-six. I knew your grandpa had found another woman there. At that time most men in the village went to Hong Kong to earn money, leaving the women to stay at home and take care of the young and the old while they formed another family there. How happy they were."

"After your dad was born, your grandpa came back to build this small house. We didn't have enough money to build the second floor. Two years later, your aunt was born. I wrote to your grandfather and waited for more than half a year. Then one day someone came and told me that he had died of cancer. What a pity. Your aunt has never seen her father. This is the only picture left."

She took out a black and white photo from her closet. It was taken when she and my grandpa had married. It has been in the closet for a long time so I couldn't see his face clearly. In the photo, Grandma was 24 years old and looked like an innocent kid with freckles on both cheeks, a big nose like mine, and a pair of bright, black eyes brimming with joy and shyness. Grandma had her youth like me, too. What was her expectation of the coming days when she was young? Now the bright eyes have gradually dimmed and the black hair has been replaced by white.

"Your father and your aunt were both very clever and admitted to university. But at that time, I could make no more than ten RMB a day. My savings were just enough to pay your father's

tuition to medical school. Your aunt was so angry with me. She lost the chance to go to college because I couldn't pay her tuition. She scolded and cried painfully at home every day. I pawned your grandpa's watch and bracelet and used the money to pay for her to attend a vocational school to learn to be a kindergarten teacher. She could have gone to a better school. I'm so sorry."

Unfortunately, my father did not go on a smooth path as Grandma had hoped. He could not get a graduation certificate because he had refused a girl's love whose father was one of the leaders of the university he attended. As a result, he could not work as a doctor. He then had no choice but to go to Foshan to make a living. My grandma was very worried about him so she insisted on going with him. At the age of sixty, she worked as a hotel maid, cleaning more than a dozen floors a day meticulously. She did it better than any of the other cleaners and was often praised by her boss. It was easier than working in the fields.

Later, my parents divorced, as did my aunt, which was the saddest thing in grandma's life. She said that she did not raise her children well. One day, my mother left without her luggage. My strong grandma cried for a long time in the attic. I cried sadly, too. She wiped away my tears, held me in her arms, and soothed, "Don't worry, grandma will be with you."

The world is so huge while we are as small as grains of sands. She just hoped her children could have a warm family and be together. After all, she has experienced the hopeless and lonely times.

That year, I was with her to celebrate for her 68th birthday. We went shopping in the market for a long time and finally decided to buy a durian, her favorite fruit. We returned home and closed the door and windows carefully so that our neighbors would not smell the "smelly" durian. We enjoyed it secretly and joyfully. Now every time I eat durian, I always remember that nothing could ever as delicious as that durian I ate with her.

3

Grandma was once a devout Buddhist, and every day she burned incense to pray for the families. Without studying for a day, she

could recite a Buddhist book and the Buddhist scriptures. Later, my dad went to Hong Kong and work there. She loves our hometown deeply and was unwilling to leave.

A major illness forced her to leave for Hong Kong for medical treatment. My 80-year-old grandma was diagnosed with multiple diseases and had four operations that had a low rate of success. Miraculously she survived. She laughed afterward, and said, "I've been brought back to life. Death was unwilling to steal my life."

In Hong Kong, she was arranged by the government to live in a nursing home, where she met Mrs. Chen, a Christian. She brought my grandma into the church and told her how God loves the world.

At the age of 83, she converted to Christianity and knocked at the door of the Lord Jesus. She began to read the Bible with unwearied patience. Today, she is proud to say that she is in the arms of Lord Jesus. She says she is on the way to the Lord. It is a long, complete journey with a beginning and an end.

People of different ages have different ways of living. Grandma has spent her whole hard life with faith. Some may say that she is superstitious, but I prefer to say that it is an incredible strength that supported her to endure such a tough life. The weakness of man lies in the body, which cannot withstand burning and beatings. But the heart can withstand hammer and needle. She believed in Buddha in the past and believes in Jesus at present. Only in this way can she strengthen her heart with invisible help. She could have resisted, but she chose the path that was good for others and didn't care how many challenges facing her on this path.

In fact, she is her own savior.

4

The rain was diminishing while the crowd in the station was growing more turbulent. She was waiting for me to have her soup. I went through Customs, exchanged for Hong Kong dollars and bought a temporary phone card.

And then I took the subway and entered the port area, gazing at the small, but prosperous city.

The nursing home is located at the corner of the bustling

street. I looked up at billboards with a wide range of colors. I found the red words "Jing An Nursing Home" written on a white background. The corridor is narrow and the walls are stained. On the third floor, on one side is a dental clinic, and on the other side is the nursing home. I pushed the door open and saw rows of beds separated by plastic boards, resembling a hospital ward. There were more than a dozen old people living in this layer. Most were in their 90s. They had difficulty in walking and could not speak clearly. They lay in bed with splotched and shabby sheets. This enclosed space was full of senescence and death, a sharp contrast for this turbulent, bustling city.

The old people dully looked at me. I smiled in embarrassment, hurried past, and went straight into the inner room where my grandma was living. The door was open and I could smell the savory soup. She was leaning against the window sill. After the rain, the sun was shining, blowing away the dark clouds. It seemed that she was a little shorter. In the days when she was alone, in this small room, what did she see? What was in her mind?

I quietly approached. She was holding a Bible in her hands, like a child taking care of her precious treasure that she had been dying for having for a long time.

"Because everything God made is good, and nothing is evil if it is taken with praise. For it is made holy by the word of God and by prayer...."

I bent down to kiss her wrinkled cheek. She smiled happily, holding my arm like a child. Her arms were weaker than before.

"Grandma, I'm here! I can't wait to have that soup."

My Childhood

I was born in Zhaoqing, a small city in Guangdong Province, where I had a happy time with my parents. They sent me to the best kindergarten in our city, dressed me like a princess. When I see photos of me as a child, I admire and envy that lovely girl. Every weekend, Dad started his motorcycle and drove us around for fun. I loved to see trains, so he often took me to a bridge next to the train station. I stood on the bridge, watching trains passing under the bridge excitedly.

At that time, my parents seemed to love each other very much and we seemed to have an enviable warm family. But eventually, I realized that this was the illusion my parents were trying to create. In order to make me happy, they tried to maintain our family, even though their love had disappeared before Mother gave birth to me. Unsurprisingly, they divorced when I was five years old.

Later, they left by train. "Be a good girl. We will come back soon," Mother said to me before they left.

"I know. Remember to bring me gifts," I said happily. But finally, I realized that they had lied to me. I waited for them for a long time. They didn't return. "I miss Mom and Dad. Why did they abandon me? They don't love me anymore," I cried.

"Don't be sad. Your parents have gone to earn money. I will be with you. Don't be afraid. We all love you forever," Grandma comforted. She was in tears, too.

Since my parents divorced, we never again sat down together for a meal. Mother often complained that Father had ruined her youth. At first, they were still in contact, but every time they chatted, they ended up in a quarrel. Finally, they didn't contact each other. I dared not mention Father when I lived with Mother, even though I really hoped that we could celebrate my birthday together. After my fifth birthday, I lost the chance to eat birthday cake and sing "Happy Birthday" with them.

Father is absent from my life. He went to Hong Kong, where he reorganized his family and had my two brothers. I never blame him, because I think he has the right to pursue his own life. I just feel regret that there is a gap in my life due to the lack of Father's love. Anyway, I prefer to believe that he loves me but just doesn't know how to express it.

After my parents divorced and went to work in different cities, Grandma took me back to our hometown which is a poor, peaceful, small village called Fufo where I spent most of my childhood.

Initially, I had a few local friends. The village children played many games I had never played. In the city, amusement parks are children's game paradise. In the countryside, fields, streams, and forests are children's playgrounds.

Liang Xuehua was my neighbor and two years older than me. I considered her to be my sister. She said, "You are my little sister. I will protect you. Nobody will dare bully you."

I was moved and said, "Thank you, my dear sister."

She cared about me and was very kind to me. Every time she went out to play, she brought me with her. I was an onlooker, watching other children running in the fields, swimming, catching loaches in the stream, and playing hide-and-seek in the forest. Loneliness and a sense of not belonging gradually disappeared, as I began to join their games. I slowly had many innocent, playful friends.

I often missed my parents, wondering where they were and when they would come back to stay with me. I didn't feel angry, because I knew that my friends' parents were also absent. Maybe they had all gone to work in order to get money to buy delicious cakes and beautiful clothes for us. Thinking this way made it easier to adapt to life without them.

Only Grandma was with me. A kind, considerate woman, she never scolded me. When I did something wrong, she patiently explained the problem to me and helped me correct myself. When I quarreled with my friends, she said, "Friendship is part of life. Real friendship needs understanding and forgiveness."

When I failed an exam, she said, "Scores are not everything. Learning from failure is more important." When I was denigrated by others, she said, "Not everyone shares your value, but keep in mind that everyone is living with their own value. Don't care much about what others say about you, especially those who are not important to you. You are unique. Don't be self-abased."

When she knew that I lied to her, she said, "Kid, I will forgive whatever you do that is wrong. You are young and naive. But you must remember that you should be honest. Making mistakes is normal. No one is perfect. Admit your mistakes bravely and honestly instead of trying to hide them. Never be a liar."

She taught me a lot about life. This is still very meaningful as I know to pursue my life.

I miss the time we spent together. One hot summer night, Grandma and I lay on a wooden bed. She fanned me with a bamboo fan, telling me the story of her youth. She said, "We had tough times, with no money, no candies, no beautiful clothes, and no books. We had no chance to study in school. We had to do farm work. Our women had no right to marry those we loved." I fell asleep slowly. At other times, we sat in the sun, in front of the door, I read my storybook as she patched holes in my skirt. When I was ill, she stayed up all night sitting beside me. When I opened my eyes, she was always there.

Later, I was admitted to the best primary school in the county. The school was a long way from my home. It took one and a half hours to walk from my home to school. Every day before dawn, Grandma and I walked hand in hand down the road, listening to the cocks and birds. The world was quiet and peaceful. When vehicles passed, dust danced in the light. In spite of walking a long way, I never felt tired, because Grandma was there holding my hand. She walked this distance twice a day without complaint. She said that she hoped I would be a happy, kind person. At that time, I didn't need to worry about anything. Grandma helped solve all my problems. "I am here. Don't worry," she said countless times.

Without my parents' company, I sometimes felt sad and lonely. But Grandma's love and the company of my friends

illuminated my world. My childhood was a story of bitter and sweet, sadness and happiness. All the people and things in this story, such as my beloved grandma, my kind friends, my lovely rabbit, tadpoles and fish in the creeks, flowers and grass in the woods, the bridge at sunset, golden fields, the nest beneath the eaves and so on, are worth yearning for and recalling in my whole life.

After I graduated from primary school, I left Grandma, my good friend, the small village, and the road that was full of our footprints. Mother took me to another city to attend middle school. When I began to miss bygone times, I realized that my childhood was gone. I will never forget the warm people and events that illuminated my childhood.

Demon Possessed

My uncle ran out of the house. Something urgent had happened. I followed him.

She wore a red shirt and black pants. A gust of wind made her clothes flutter. Her body was as flimsy as a piece of paper. I was afraid that she would be swept away by a strong wind. She held a pillow tightly in one hand. Her trembling fists were clenched. I noticed her pale face. It was quite abnormal. A few pink finger marks were obvious. Her blue lips had been bitten. Her swollen, bloodshot eyes stared ahead blankly. The pupils were motionless. Her younger son supported her. Her eldest son and daughter followed. Their faces were clouded. Something bad had happened!

Uncle walked up and asked anxiously, "Have the results come out?"

With all her strength, she pushed Uncle away. Her eyes were wide open, and she seemed to be saying something. I was scared. She mumbled, "Ghost! Ghost! Ghost!"

Her daughter said, "Sorry. She has lost her mind. The doctors carefully examined her and found nothing wrong. We had to bring her back, hoping she will return to normal soon. She has refused to eat for two days."

"She is mentally ill. Take her to a mental hospital. Who knows what will happen if it goes on like this?" said Uncle.

"We'll handle it. Come on," said her younger son impatiently.

She passed me, emanating a stench that petrified me. It was incredible. I couldn't say a word. I thought she was the most beautiful old lady in our village. Although old, her big eyes were still bright and her gold earrings glimmered. She smiled at me kindly every time I passed her house. In fact, every time I saw her, she smiled, though I knew she had a hard life. She had reared three children on her own.

This time, I didn't see her smile.

The next day brought news of her death.

At her funeral, the sound of drums and sona horns deafened me like thunder. The odor of gunpowder was everywhere. I escaped to the second floor where some people were talking.

"The fortune-teller said that one of her family members must die this year and it was likely to be her younger son."

"Did she believe it?"

"Sure. She managed to save her son's life."

"I guess her children knew that. They should be grateful."



唐文睿

Tang Wenrui

Cara

My name is Tang Wenrui. Rui means smart and kind. My English name is Cara because Cara is a brave female character in one of my favorite novels and I want to be as brave as her. I'm 19 years old.

I'm kind and strong-hearted. My grandpa influenced me a lot. His experience inspired me to be strong-hearted.

My parents also influence me. They often bring some great books to me. I love reading. I like watching movies and some TV series, such as the Legend of 1900 and Breaking Bad. Reading and watching movies and some TV series are ways to know more about the world. I'm so eager to know more about myself and the colorful world. I like Egypt. I want to learn Arabic by myself. I hope one day I can go to Egypt and experience local culture.

I want to be independent and take responsibility for my family. I should be responsible for my dreams. My dream is to be a

college teacher specialized in literature or philosophy. I want a life with time and energy to study the things I like and travel.

As for now, I like my major, and I'm going to teach others English in the next several years of my life, so I want to make my English better.

"Life sometimes is miserable. Never give up," Mother said.

Life is complicated, but I'm willing to make myself better whatever happens.

A Hero

Grandpa was my hero when I was two. I have many reasons for this. I heard many dramatic stories about Grandpa.

He died when I was two. It's very hard for me to recall his appearance. Nevertheless, I have an image of him in my head. I saw his photo once at my aunt's house. He was in his sixties in that photo. He was hatchet-faced and has single-fold eyelids, and thin lips, and white hair. But his eyes showed that he was full of hope. He must have been handsome when he was young.

"How tall was Grandpa?" I asked Father.

"Tall and strong," Father said.

That's my impression of him.

My great-grandfather was a landlord, so Grandpa lived a good life before the agrarian revolution. He was a prince in the family, eating tasty food, wearing beautiful clothes, and was well educated. Grandpa was the youngest of his generation and spoiled.

"He started to smoke opium as a teenager and loafed around. Then he was sold as a soldier to the KMT (Chinese National Party) by his brother, but then he was rescued," Father said.

The agrarian revolution happened in 1927 and almost all the family members were shot by the government, except for Grandpa, because they thought he was useless.

"Your great-grandfather was a great landlord and official. He treated the farmers like family members, so it was ridiculous to shoot almost all of them," Father commented.

Grandpa matured and acted bravely. He buried all his family members one by one, a painful experience that made him strong-hearted.

"He became a primary school teacher and built his own family. As the only provider of the family, Grandpa behaved like a hero," my father said.

He and Grandma raised five children. Father is the youngest. Grandpa lived with my parents when he got old.

"He was so nice to you," Mother said.

He cooked for my parents and did housework after he married my grandma.

One day, he suddenly died of a cerebral hemorrhage after buying some street food, walking through the door of our house.

I told Father I remember Grandpa gently calling my name to have lunch with the sweetest smile while the sun was shining and the flowers smelled good. I thought he would protect me forever. That's why I call him a sweet hero.

A Cat

Before I was eleven, my family lived in a house with a small yard, unlike modern residential buildings. It was a little house with a retro look. Father, mother and I spent seven years there. I was impressed by Mimi, our neighbors' cat. I think of it as a symbol of my childhood.

One day when I went home after dark, Mimi was waiting for me in the alley. I was very energetic when I was a little girl. I did very well in my study and I could finish my homework efficiently. Playing outside was enjoyable because our house was next to a school and there were many interesting things in the school playground. There was a little sand field, and there were some trees on the lawn. It was my paradise, my heaven! My friends and I used to pile sand together, climb trees, fight, and so on. Every time I came home at dusk, Mimi was waiting for me on the way home. She had cold eyes, a slender figure, soft yellow and white fur, a slim body, and green eyes that were a little frightening. She sat staring straight at me as though she saw through me.

One day when my parents went to work, and I wanted to go outside to play, I open the door and found Mimi staring at me. I have a primitive fear of animals. I fear their sharp claws and unknown personalities. I wanted to do something to distract her.

The third thing I remember is that one day I saw her putting a lovely bird into her mouth, I was so anxious that I yelled at her. She spat out the bird, which flew away. I thought maybe eating birds was her nature.

I miss Mimi.

Sitting by the Roadside

We were sitting by the roadside. It was almost three in the morning. We were exhausted.

My senior high school friend said, "We are young. We can stay up late and spend the night outdoors."

I said, "Yes, we can, but we don't have to."

He said, "Are you really tired? Maybe we can do something interesting."

I felt dizzy. The wind blew. We were cold. It was winter. The wind tangled my hair. I felt unreal. However, I loved this strange feeling.

"I totally agree. Let's enjoy sitting here," I said inspiringly.

It was a city of shining stars of which we were two. This city was not quiet. Several teenagers were drinking near us. Their bodies wobbled. Several cars swept passed. The street lamps were on. Half of the shops were still open, especially the snack bars.

I was not used to this. I had not stayed outside this late before. He took a deep breath to relax. I followed suit.

I turned on my phone and played a favorite tune. The whole world came alive. I inhaled the cold air. It was fresh. I felt soberer. The music was sweet and I felt less dizzy.

The teenagers went away.

He held a package. He and I both didn't know what was inside. However, at that moment, I forgot tiredness, coldness, and what we were going to do. We had a heart-to-heart talk.

I liked him a lot. OK, I had a crush on him.

His face was red. He looked at me. I shyly turned away.

Suddenly I saw the woman we were waiting for. She was a homeless stranger with a child. It was her package. She had asked us to keep her package. She said it was important.

He gave it to her. She left.

He and I said goodbye to each other and went home separately.

I miss him.



柳宇欣

Liu Yuxin

Ada

I am Liu Yuxin, and my English name is Ada. I was born on April 19, 1997, in Yulin, Shaanxi Province.

There are four people in my family. My father is a businessman, my mother is a housewife, and my brother is a student, who is thirteen years younger than me. My parents have set a good example for me, and they convey precious values, which have had a permanent effect on me.

I attended middle and senior school in my hometown. When I was in middle school, I did not study well until I met Mr. Li, a math teacher. When I was faced with problems, Mr. Li gave me appropriate suggestions and told me not to give up. With his help, I made much progress.

I will work hard and commit teacher's suggestions to mind and practice. Although I am not certain about the future, I will try my best to learn English well to make a better future.

My Father

To me, my father is young all the time. He is full of energy and does not seem to be tired. He gets up early and comes back in the dead of night, he has done this for many years. Although I know he is busy, I like to play with him. When I was younger, I always sat on my father's shoulders and jumped up and down, bursting into laughter. On every evening in summer, my father would stay up late to swat flies in afraid of we were stung by flies. My father is brave: he would catch a thief on the street, he would crawl to the high roof to fix the broken wires, and he would keep calm when the family is in trouble. Sometimes my father is "coward": each time the doctor gives my father injections, my father would become hesitate, when my mother demands my father take medicines, the eyebrow of my father would go closer, each time my mother finds fault with my father for not doing dishes or not working hard, my father would keep quiet and then communicate with my mother patiently.

Gradually my father becomes more reticent, he would watch me go without any words, looking after the train as it left the station. He would sit on the sofa lonely, looking at the wine and empty his glass at one draught, I once glanced at my father, I can feel his disappointment and helplessness.

My father loves my mother, my brother and me, in turn, we love him. The bikes parked on the two sides of the street often remind me of the scene that my father taught me how to ride bicycles, where I sat on the bicycle seat, clenching two handlebars. My father stood behind me, controlling the bicycle, telling me the steps of riding a bicycle. Sometimes my father would help me and push me forward suddenly, which made me excited and so happy.

I will never forget those memories, all of those mark my father's love and my deep appreciation towards him.

Be Careful of Dangers

The story is for kind men. Please think twice about helping others.

Clubs organize activities. Li Mei is a freshman. Li is excited to see many clubs. She chooses a teaching club.

The club has a vacation plan. The plan is to teach in poor villages. Li is excited. Li leaves to teach. She brings supplies. She takes books and gifts for kids. She goes to meet other students. Travel to the village takes three days. Everyone looks forward to their arrival. Next morning, they come to a street.

"Are we to have lunch here?"

"There is no other place for lunch."

"Is that restaurant our lunch place?"

Then they take lunch together. The food there is not bad. Each student eats quickly.

"Are we in the village now?"

"Almost," the team leader says.

"That's good!" the group yells.

"I am so tired," one girl says.

"We can sleep well tonight."

"Will we meet the children today?"

"Yes!" the leader says.

After lunch, they walk to the car.

The street is crowded, untidy. On the street, some men look around strangely.

Li's belly aches. She leaves the car to find a toilet. A man walks around anxiously. Li feels confused.

"Excuse me, what's wrong with you?"

"I must load the truck."

"Is anyone helping you?"

"Yes, but I need one more man."

"Can you help me?" the man asks.

Li hesitates and then agrees.

"Where is the truck?"

"Follow me," the man smiled.

They walk down the street. Li talks with the man happily. The man asks about her family, university. There are a few stalls in the street. Li feels uncomfortable.

"Where are we going?" she asks.

The man says nothing. Li stops, she understands the danger. She is about to escape. The man knocks her down.

Li's friend notices Li's absence. She tells Wang. Wang tells everyone to find Li. Some go to retail stores. Others go to restaurants. Several hours pass. They don't find Li. Wang suggests Li is in trouble. He calls the police. The police find nothing. The team searches day after day. Finally, they give up. Everyone is sad.

(Three years later)

It is difficult to find a job. Wang walks down the street. He sees a crowd of men. Wang sees a woman. She wears dirty clothes. She does not speak. The crowd talks about her.

She sits on the ground. Then the woman looks up. Wang looks at her. She is Li!

Wang says, "Li Mei, do you know me?"

Li turns around and looks at Wang. She cries, hugs Wang tightly.

Li is saved. Wang is curious about Li's experiences. Li keeps silent.

"Don't be afraid," Wang comforts, "Take your time!"

One day, Li writes a letter. Wang reads it. Wang understands everything now. "Don't trust stranger easily!" This is the last sentence. Wang is sad and angry. He calls the police. Finally, the police catch the human trader.

A Sip of Milk

What is he like?"

I stood up, walked to a mirror, and inspected at myself. I was stressed. My eyebrows were drawn into a frown. I could see the fear in my eyes. I was afraid that he would put me in a heart-breaking situation.

I looked forward to his arrival. I had been waiting a long time. We had not seen each other since I got to know him, almost a year ago. We communicated silently. In the beginning, I often ignored him. As time went on, he changed. He conveyed more information. I found he was interesting. He was cute, maybe handsome, intelligent, humorous... his advantages could not be overestimated. I was accustomed to his companionship.

I returned to my seat, watching a stream of passers-by. Some were excited, some were crying, some looked as stressed as me. Suddenly, I heard a cry, which attracted our attention. The sound of continuous crying released some of my tension. After a while, that sound slowly faded away.

"What is he like? What will he be like? Will we look alike?"

I could not help thinking about it. I stood and walked in front of the mirror, scanning my eyes, nose, mouth and then tried to draw his portrait. It was fun to play this game.

Several minutes later, he had not appeared, I was on the verge of losing my patience. It was cold. Currents of cool air blew in my face. I decided to buy a bottle of hot milk.

Another cry arose.

I came back quickly. Father smiled and shouted, "You have a brother!"

I was excited. He, my brother appeared finally.

I took a sip of milk. It tasted better than ever before.



江宇晴
Jiang Yuqing
Evelyn

I'm Evelyn. I come from Suzhou, Anhui province. I love the city of Xi'an, where I can try to visit a lot of places of historical interest and scenic beauty and also enjoy delicious food. I want to be a teacher since I was a little girl. So, I chose Shaanxi Normal University.

Great-Grandfather

Movies and books about the history of early twentieth China often remind me of Great-grandfather. I lived with him for seven years. He passed away at the age of ninety-four in 2015. His words, smiles, manners, and the stories he told me are always with me.

Great-grandfather once showed me some photos of his youth. He wore a gray Chinese tunic and held a thick book. He looked decent and courteous, like intellectuals in early twentieth century China.

Children love asking "Why?" and Great-grandfather was the one who was never impatient with me.

"Great-grandpa, why do you know so many interesting things? Do you read a lot?"

"Sure, I like reading all kinds of books."

"You read them in school?"

"No, I never went to school. I read whenever I'm free. Most of the books I read are from second-hand bookstores."

"You haven't been to school? How could you be a teacher?"

"I studied several years in an old-style private school. Later, I studied by myself."

He had white hair and a thin face marked by fine wrinkles. I never heard him laugh loudly. He was quiet, especially when I didn't bother him.

Great-grandfather was good at calligraphy. He used a pen and also a writing brush. Every year before Spring Festival, neighbors would come and ask him to write a pair of antithetical couplets for their home, which he willingly did. He used to teach me how to practice calligraphy, but I preferred drawing tortoises and flowers. He looked at my paper and sighed, "Do you know why we should write characters neatly? Chinese believe that the style is the man. Handwriting reveals so much about a person."

Although I still can't do calligraphy, I miss that time so much. According to our local traditional customs, we can't put up couplets for three years after a family member passes away, but in fact, my family still doesn't want to put up couplets that are not written by Great-grandfather.

When I was a little girl, I often sat beside him and listened to him.

"During the war, I was teaching at a small rural primary school. I taught math, Chinese, P.E., and what to do when Japanese soldiers came. Those bastards didn't allow us to teach Chinese, and often came and harassed us, so usually, I taught my students in the basement or my courtyard."

"It was a hard time, wasn't it?" I sighed.

"True. About ten years later, the war ended, but soon a famine broke out. We couldn't live on my salary, so your great-grandma and I moved to the city and did several jobs."

"And you stopped teaching?"

"I taught just a few years. During the Cultural Revolution, I stopped. After that, I was too old to teach."

I learned a lot about real history and that I should cherish my pleasant life from him.

I left his home at the age of ten years old. When I visited him on holidays, he asked me, "How is your study?"

Eating snacks that he prepared for me, I answered loudly, "Great!"

The pressure of study got more intense, so I rarely visited him except during the Spring Festival. He was already in bad health when I was in high school. One rainy Sunday, I went to the hospital to visit him.

"How is your study?" he asked.

"Not bad. I'll take part in the college entrance exam next year."

"Good, I'm too old. Maybe I can't see you enter a college."

"Don't say that! You will be soon backing on your feet!"

"Try your best to study hard."

"Sure, I will."

I never thought that it would be our last conversation. A month later, my grandfather told me that he had passed away quietly. I didn't feel too sad, because he had such an experienced, worthy life. Besides, as it's often said that as long as we are remembered, we remain alive.

My Dream

I don't want to write a self-introduction with such boring things as my name, age, hobbies, and so on. I want to share with you is my dream. Well, what is my dream? Why do I have the dream?

It all began in my childhood when I lived with my great-grandfather, who was a primary school teacher in the last century. He had a strong love of learning and reading. Under his influence, I was interested in reading books in my room instead of hanging out in the streets. He also often described his experience of being a teacher.

"Being a teacher, I need to set papers, collect them, and then correct them. There were some troublesome students in each class; I had to pay more attention to them. Sometimes I was really annoyed and upset," he once said.

"Did you like teaching?" I asked.

"Yes. Although it's tricky, I love to teach. When I saw children thirst for knowledge, I felt that I was responsible. I tried to teach them all I knew. I felt like that each effort I made could help them a lot. When I heard their response, it showed their understanding, and I felt very satisfied." He answered.

At that time, I thought that all teachers should be well informed, decent and respectable like him. I felt proud when some neighbors who didn't know my name called me "Teacher Jiang's great-granddaughter." My favorite game was that pretending that I was a teacher and my dolls were my students.

Well, now you probably know that my dream is to become a teacher. If my great-grandfather sowed the seed of my dream, my beloved teachers helped the seed root and sprout.

"Can you just speak loudly so that I can hear you?" my kindergarten and first-grade primary school teacher often said to me. Every time most of my classmates raised their hands high, eager to answer questions. Meantime, I was quiet with my head down. On my term reports, they always wrote, "You are really a shy

girl. I hope you can be braver!" In fact, they had nothing else to write. After all, my grade was at the middle level of our class and I never arrived late or was absent from classes without excuses.

I spent my initial years in school as if I were invisible and intangible. Everything changed in the third grade when Mrs. Yang became my class teacher. She taught me Chinese. During the first class she taught, she called my name and asked me to comment on a poem. I whispered my thoughts. She didn't hear me. She came near and asked me to say it again. She kept silent for a couple of seconds after hearing my comments and said loudly, "Great idea!"

I was excited for the rest of the class because I had rarely heard teachers praise me before. Since then, she asked me to answer a question in every class until I finally raised my hand actively. She appointed me the leader of our group. Gradually I spoke loudly in class and had been in the top three of our class.

I am determined to become a teacher because I really appreciated her making me a better person.

Aristotle said, "Excellence is not an act but a habit." I was known as the best student for three years, which encouraged me to study hard throughout the secondary school as in primary school and entered the best high school in our city.

My high school history teacher was a middle-aged man with a good sense of humor. He really made history come to life. In his class, I couldn't take my eyes off him. He didn't have a charming appearance but his personality attracted me. He was responsible and warm-hearted. He once said, "I love you so much that I can't help smiling when I come into class. But I am a teacher and I must be serious. I often ask myself to keep a straight face before coming into the classroom!" We all burst into laughter.

One early evening near Gaokao, he said, "Stop studying for a minute and look at the sky. What a beautiful sunset!"

We looked at the rosy clouds, feeling like the burden of the examination was a little relieved.

In the third year of high school, I was loaded down with the pressure of the college entrance exam. But I still read some history books and discussed them with him after class. I deliberately took a

circular route to my home with the hope that I meet across him.

I failed in several monthly exams and felt depressed. He comforted me, and then helped me to analyze my mistakes and shortcomings in all my subjects. Sometimes, he even prepared some candies and fruit for me. He was my anchor. Reality always comes worse than you've expected, so aim for a higher level became my motto and encouraged me. At that time, I was somewhat ashamed because I thought I had a secret crush on him. However, when I think of that now, I think it was a kind of admiration and respect. This beautiful, memorable emotion irrigated my dream.

Later, I chose to go to a normal college. My dream began to put out fresh leaves.

I feel lucky I chose this college and have nice foreign teachers like you. Despite the fact that the time we stayed together was short. I learned that when you learn a foreign language, it's like opening a window or a door into a foreign country. It's you that make the road to learning English not seem like so long and boring. Besides, I learned that we need to take the responsibility of teaching seriously. You bring sunshine and nutrition to my dream.

I hope you can understand me from this introduction. I am striving to make the tree of my dream grow and thick.

A Winter Night

After a week of cold rain, winter came to this small city. The neighborhood I lived in was old. Most of the residents had no heating or air-conditioning. They warmed their houses with stoves. I hurried to my home after school, listening to steam hissing from vents connected to the stoves. I knew that Mom must have prepared a hot dinner for me.

Suddenly, I noticed bright flame lighting up the dark street. A house was on fire! I called out for help and several adults ran over.

"Call 119!" someone shouted.

People gathered and splashed water at the house.

The house was home to a thin, bent, old man. He had settled in our neighborhood for several years. His children worked in Shanghai. He lived by collecting empty bottles and recycled paper. I never saw anyone visit him.

Firemen came. They extinguished the fire and rescued the old man.

"Cui! Save her please! My Cui!" the old man cried.

"Is anyone else in the house? We didn't find anyone," a fireman said.

"Yes! My wife! My wife! Please save her!" he insisted.

The firemen rushed back into the house again. They searched carefully, but they still didn't find any trace of his wife.

"No, she is inside! She is listening to Beijing opera!" he said.

"I've heard him mention his wife, but I never see her," a neighbor said.

"He always says his wife is listening to Beijing opera."

"Maybe she is sick and unable to look after herself," other neighbors suggested.

The firemen decided to try again. Some people and the old man followed them. I felt very sympathetic, and went into the house, hoping to help. The shabby house had only three small rooms. One

of the rooms was badly burnt. The other two rooms were totally in a total mess - the walls had been burnt black.

"What are you doing here? Go home!" Mom scolded when she found me.

"Mom, see that a photo of a woman. I guess it's his wife," I said loudly, pointing to a photo on the ground.

A black and white photo with a silk white flower, and a smiling old woman. The house suddenly became quiet. Only the old man could be heard.

"Save her! She is listening to Beijing opera!"



刘雅菁
Liu Yajin
Camille

I was so ugly when I was born that my uncle exclaimed, "Is she my sister's daughter? Do not try to fool me!"

Mother still makes fun of me by using this anecdote. Mother was very beautiful and attractive when she was young. For example, my maternal grandmother insisted to pick her up after school when Mother was already in high school in order to scare away some boys who wanted to get close to Mother. On the contrary, Mother needn't worry about me at all.

I hope I can bring happiness to others, and that my parents can live comfortably on account of my efforts. I want students to get better English and have an interest in English because of my teaching methods and passion. My friends enjoy spending time with me due to my unique personality. I have confidence in making my aspirations come true.

My Maternal Grandmother

I was raised by my maternal grandmother. She told me that she had been taking care of my mother and me for around 20 years since mom was pregnant. She was an excellent, respected doctor with much experience. However, she seldom laughed or even smiled, which made me uncomfortable and anxious. Maternal grandmothers on TV shows were always kind and gracious. The difference upset me.

Mom told me that my maternal grandfather died when she was 10 years old. She showed me his photos to satisfy my curiosity. He was a handsome soldier and was very considerate. When he was alive, he had a happy life with my maternal grandmother. He was a good cook and seldom asked my maternal grandmother to cook. Sadly, he died of cancer when my mom and uncle were very young. Consequently, my maternal grandmother had to bring up two kids living tough times. She did not find another husband. She chose to handle single-parenting on her own. I imagine all her happiness faded after my maternal grandfather's death.

She struggled for many years after my Grandfather's death, and she was tougher and more stubborn than many others. She was unwilling to admit she was wrong even when it was obvious. This led to arguments with others. I learned to play the Zheng when I was in primary school. My parents asked me to practice at least 1 hour every day and told my maternal grandmother to supervise me. One day, before going out to buy vegetable and fruit, she warned me, "If you don't practice for one hour, I will tell your parents to punish you." I said, "OK, Grandmother."

I practiced for one hour and then turned on the TV. When Grandmother came back and saw me watching TV, she scolded, "Why didn't you practice?" I felt sad and said, "I did practice. Why do you say I was not?" She said angrily, "I just met our neighbor. I asked her if heard you playing the Zheng. She said she did not." "But I did! Perhaps she just passed by after I finished?" She still did

not believe in me," Your chicanery does not fool me. I will tell your parents what you have done today." I burst into tears at such injustice. I began to hate her. Why did she treat her granddaughter like this?

I was fat and short when I was in primary school. Some boys teased me and played jokes on me. I was not brave enough to fight against them. When I ran to tell the teacher, they laughed and said, "You coward! You turn to the teacher for help!" I told my parents what they had done to me, crying. Grandmother said angrily, "How dare they do things like that! I will teach them a lesson."

The second day, she waited at school to meet me. She found the boys who teased me and said loudly, "I am Liu Yajing's grandmother. If you dare laugh at her again, I call your parents to come to school. Your parents will then be utterly ashamed of you!" Everybody knew I had a strong maternal grandmother, and dared not tease me again. What's more, when they saw Grandmother, they greeted her respectfully.

In fact, she had more than 10 illnesses and had had several operations. Her most severe was diabetes, which also took her life. When she was healthy, she walked fast and was strong. She told me proudly, "I was captain of the basketball team in high school. I was really good at playing sports. Everyone admired me." Nobody ever thought one day she could just lie in bed, waiting for others to feed and dress her.

At the end of her life, she wanted to stop her treatment. Such a strong and tough woman finally yielded. Last summer vacation, I went to see her. When I entered her room, she was sleeping in a fetal position. She was more than 1.6 meters tall, but at that time she resembled a kid. Seeing me, she said slowly in a low voice, "You've come, my kid." I nodded and said, "You look better, Grandma." "Don't try to fool me, kid. I know I'm going to die. When I die, don't come to my funeral. Focus on your study. Promise me." She was so pale and weak that it was hard for her to talk much. I refrained from crying. I said, "You will be better soon!"

Grandmother passed away last year. Mother did not tell me. When I came home, mother said, "This is what your Grandmother wished. Please forgive me."

I never thought Grandmother would leave me. Although diabetes is hard to treat, I believed she would live longer. It is sad to lose someone you love deeply. She has gone to look for Grandfather. I hope she can find him and happiness.

Crystal

I had five roommates in my first year in college. At that time, I was totally a girl who was dependent on my parents too much. When my parents came back home leaving me alone in Xi'an, I was in a terrible despair. Consequently, I tried to be friendly to my roommates hoping to find a close friend who could be my shelter to wipe off my loneliness. Gradually, I constructed a happy atmosphere in my dormitory, and everyone liked to talk to me. However, there was an exception.

Although she was not different from others on the surface, I was so sensitive that I found she was trying to avoid me. I started to observe her. She was comparatively quiet, and her family was not rich. When we were chatting and laughing, she tended to stay aside silently, especially as I was there. "Perhaps I was too talkative, which was too much for her." I thought.

I began not to be noisy and communicated with her proactively. One day, we were going to class at the same time. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to open her heart, so I decided to make me interesting and friendly by talking about her recent plan. Suddenly, she said, "I never thought I would walk with you like this." I was a little shocked, but I knew she was out of amity. Then I smiled, saying, "But you are." Fortunately, we become closer.

She was a bookworm, and she spent most of her time reading novels in the library. When she was talking about the characters in the books, her eyes would sparkle with the brightest and honest good humor. She was also very hard-working. Every day she got up at seven o'clock to go to the library when we were sleeping and went to bed before ten o'clock at night. What made me admire her most was that she had a regular habit to practice calligraphy every night. It was the only thing which could put off her sleeping time. She knew what she aspired to. More importantly, she had a strong desire and persistence to get it.

She had changed a lot compared with what she was when we

first met. She told me that she seldom interacted with classmates in high school, so she was separated from the class with no one talking to. I could hardly imagine that feeling because I always had many friends. We always say we are lonely, probably just because we don't understand what loneliness really is. It was a big surprise for me that she finally opened her heart and became an optimistic and happy girl.

Simultaneously, I felt a great success. I appreciated that I chose to be nice. The one you thought unimportant may be the one from whom you can really learn. Never judge people from appearance. Perhaps one day, her radiance will fall on you. I'm so happy that the crystal is glittering again.

A Sunny Day

I walked out of the room with tears in my eyes. I pretended I was fine in front of my partners. Then, suddenly, I burst out crying.

I thought I would feel better later. When recalling how devoted I was to it and how I endeavored to challenge myself, I was very sad.

It was finished.

It was a bright sunny day. Warm and pleasant, but I was cold and hopeless. I attempted to calm down. I kept telling myself, "It is OK, everything has a reason. This is life. Don't blame yourself. It's not your fault."

"How about your one-month effort? You rehearsed the show countless times! Every weekend you got up at 6:30 a.m. to go to the new campus to practice with your partners. Why did they disqualify you after they had accepted you?"

I was confused.

I wished I had never come here.

I called my roommate.

As soon as I heard her voice, I burst into loud sobs. Passers-by stared at me as if I was a nutcase.

"I was disqualified."

"How is that possible? You said they liked you!"

"I don't know. Never try to imagine what others think. They don't know how to respect others. They have power. That is what they do."

"Be confident and optimistic! Good thing comes from bad things. Sweetie, you are brilliant with the most beautiful voice. I am so proud of you! I will be there for you, always."

"Thanks, darling. I really appreciate it."

I took a deep breath, boarded the bus, listened to music, and tried to forget my unhappiness. I missed my mom.

When I got off the bus, I saw a girl running towards me. It was her, my roommate!

She gave me a warm, silent hug. I understood.

It was a bright sunny day. Warm and pleasant.